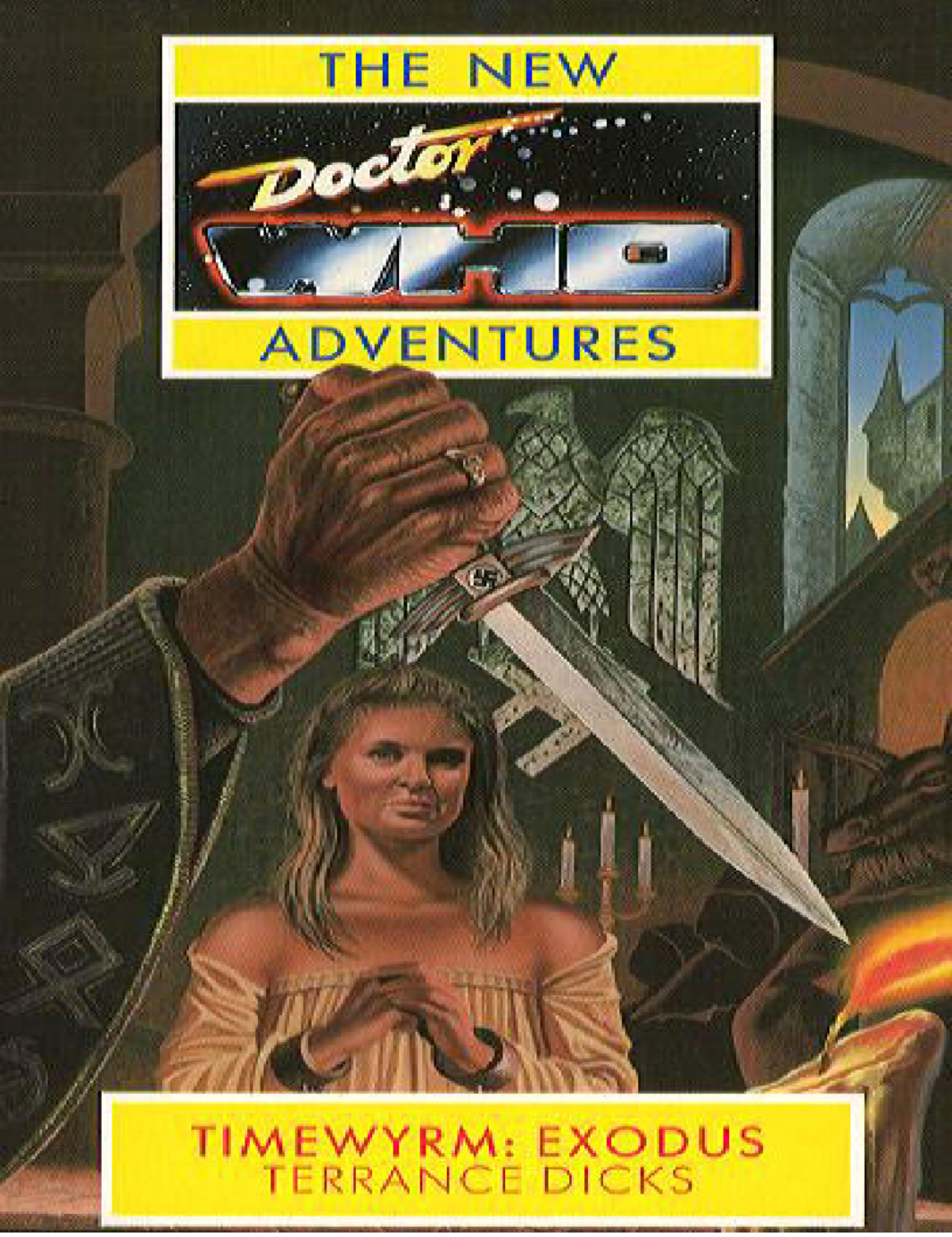
THE NEW

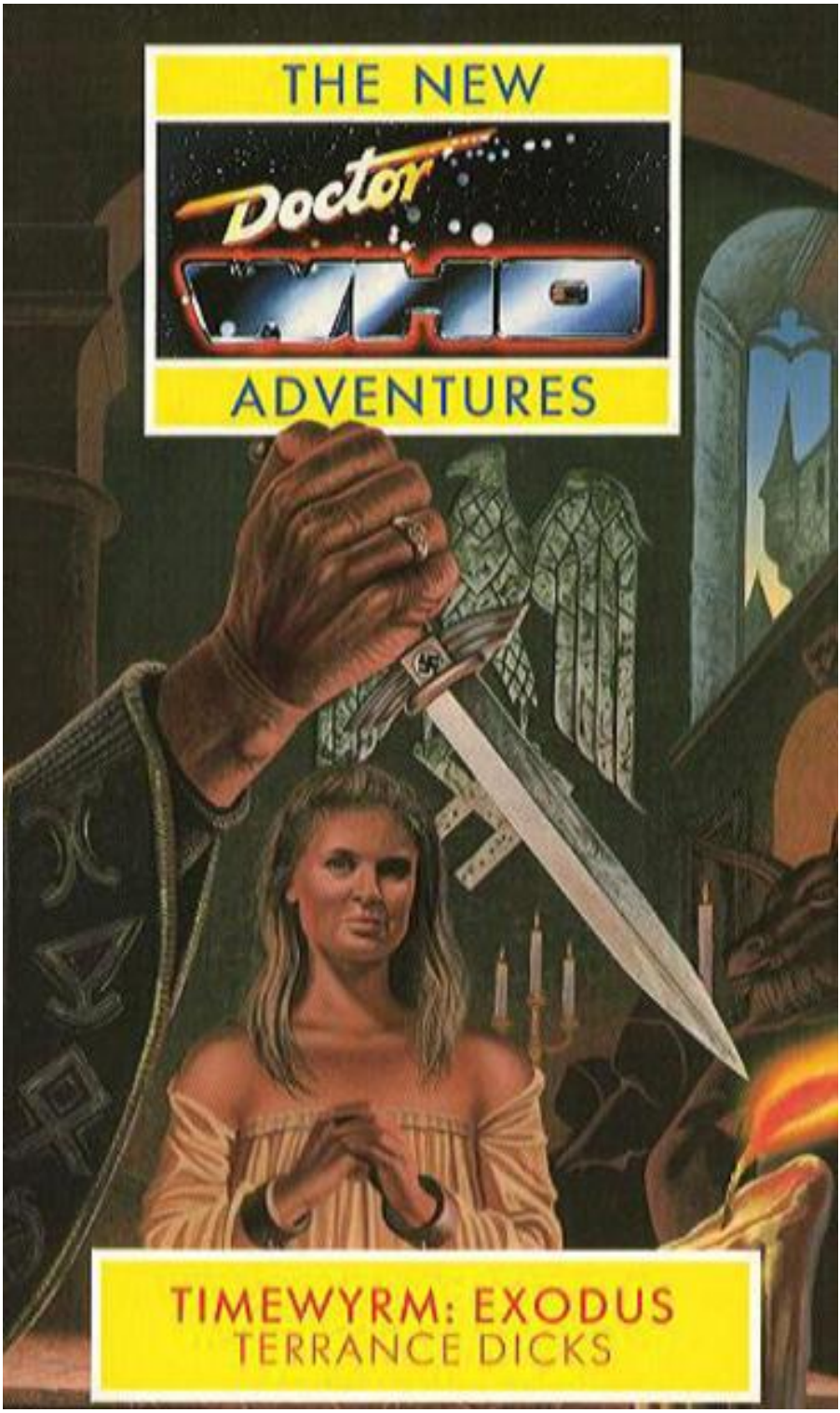
Doctor Who

ADVENTURES



TIMEWYRM: EXODUS

TERRANCE DICKS


THE NEW
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ADVENTURES
TIMEWYRM: EXODUS
TERRANCE DICKS

TIMEWYRM: EXODUS

Terrance Dicks.

PROLOGUE: 25000 B.C.

She whirled through the space-time vortex in a cyclone of frustration and hatred, her ego seared by the burning pain of failure. For all her parting boasts she had been defeated, forced to retreat. It was outrageous, unbelievable. Was she not a goddess - and more than a goddess?

Rationalization came swiftly. She had not retreated, she had withdrawn by choice, fallen back to plan a terrible revenge. She examined the newness of her mind, that part of her which had once been, and in a sense still was, her enemy. She considered his strengths, his weak points. She would attack him by striking at the world he loved. She would destroy this planet -

better still, she would ensure that it destroyed itself.

There was death and destruction enough in the age in which she had come into being. But bows and spears and swords killed far too slowly, left the planet itself unharmed. More devastating weapons were called for - and mankind would surely develop them.

Free now to move through space and time she began scanning the planet's future probabilities...

She saw warrior hordes sweeping across the plains; severed heads piled high in barbarian encampments. She saw men-at-arms falling beneath a storm of arrows, regiments mown down by a deadly hail of musketfire. But still the slaughter was too slow...

She sped forwards through time and saw weary men stumbling across war-torn terrain, caught in bloody tangles of barbed wire, dying under the withering fire of machine guns. Death came with satisfactory swiftness now, but the threat to the planet was still missing. But soon, very soon...

She chose a time of ferment and change when the powers of destruction she sought were still newly discovered.

She chose a country, defeated, humiliated, yet with an awesome potential for strength and unity and power.

She chose one man, bitter, neurotic, a failure in all he had attempted but with forces of hatred and resentment inside him that matched her own. One single atom in all the seething masses of humanity. How amusing to use that atom to destroy the planet! It was easy to enter his mind, slipping between the synapses of the brain like layers of micro-circuitry slotting between the valves of a primitive wireless. It was easy to enter, but once inside...

As she explored the mind's potential, she found that although primitive it was unbelievably powerful. She felt her energy levels being dammed, her circuits inhibited, her powers fragmented. In sudden panic she tried to wrench free and found herself held fast.

She was trapped in the mind of a madman.

PART ONE 1951 OCCUPATION

A fitting culmination to the swift succession of glorious victories that became known as the Blitzkrieg was the successful execution of Operation Sealion. With almost supernatural good timing, the forces of the Reich took full advantage of the period of calm which followed the freak storms that had decimated the British Navy.

General Strauss's 19th army landed in force on the south coast, establishing a beach-head between Folkestone and Worthing. Thanks to the previous defeat of the British Air Force by the invincible Luftwaffe, air supremacy was maintained at all times. Despite the boastings of the arch-criminal Churchill, later executed for war crimes, British resistance was minimal and the operation was completed in six days...

The Thousand Year Reich - The Glorious Beginning by Joseph Goebbels.

Published New Berlin, 1947.

1: TIMEWARP

Beside a broad and sluggish river, a group of concrete pavilions huddled together under a fine drizzling rain. A tall, slender tower soared gracefully into the mists towards a grey and cloudy sky. A soggy flag hung limply from the flagstaff at the top. At the edge of the site, in a still unfinished area, a blue police box materialized amidst a

clutter of building materials. A flimsy stake-fence cordoned off a section of river bank, littered with stacks of timber, concrete breeze blocks and general builders" litter, beyond which a concrete embankment sloped steeply down to the river.

A smallish dark-haired man popped out of the police box. He wore shabby brown checked trousers, a brown sports jacket with a garish fair-isle pullover beneath, and a jaunty straw hat. He clutched a red-handled umbrella and peered around him with keen grey eyes.

A brown-haired, round-faced girl in a badge-covered bomber jacket followed him from the police box, closing the door behind her. She too looked around, though with considerably less enthusiasm.

"I don't suppose you know where we are, Professor - or when?"

The little man, who was more usually known as the Doctor, gave her a reproachful glance. "As it happens, I do, Ace. We've arrived in London. The Festival of Britain, 1951!"

"How can you be so sure?"

He pointed with his umbrella. "I recognized the Skylon at once. So magnificently frivolous! So un-British! A tower with no other purpose than to be a tower! A symbol to mark the end of post-war austerity, and the hope of future prosperity."

"You what?"

"England's just recovering from the battering she had in the war."

"We won, didn't we? Our finest hour and all that? People never stop going on about it."

"You won, but only just. The whole country was exhausted. Now they're getting over it, so they've decided to kick up their heels a bit and have a Festival."

The girl called Ace surveyed the wide expanse of rain lashed concrete.

"Some Festival!"

"Remember you're British, Ace. You're supposed to like taking your pleasures sadly."

Ace sniffed and a raindrop ran down her nose. She studied the slender tower and saw a sudden gust of wind unfurl the flag. "Professor?"

"What?"

"If this is England and we won the war, why's there a swastika flag on that tower?"

The Doctor looked. There it was, the black crooked cross in the white circle against a blood-red background.

"There was one just like it in Commander Millington's office in the Naval Base," Ace said helpfully. "You remember, he'd turned the place into a replica of the cipher room in Berlin..."

"Yes, yes," said the Doctor impatiently. He glared at the flag. "Let's take a look around."

"Hang on, Professor!"

"What?"

"Is she here, then?"

"Who?"

"Ishtar, the Timewyrm, whatever she calls herself."

The Doctor took a small device from his pocket. It was completely inert, no sound, no flashing lights. He shook it, tapped it, and then put it away.

"Apparently not."

"We're supposed to be chasing her."

"Well, maybe we overshot, or undershot, or something. It's easily done, nobody's perfect."

They walked along the muddy riverside path, looking for a way on to the Festival site. Eventually they reached a place where a section of the fence had been trodden down to provide a makeshift entrance. Probably kids, thought Ace. They'd sooner play on the building site than visit the Festival. Come to think of it, so would I.

The Doctor led her through the gap, out of the building-site area and into one of the pavilions. It held a photo exhibition, a series of events pinned down in black and white photographs. The photographs were on stands which wound round the pavilion in a trail that was obviously meant to be followed. But there was no one to follow it - the

pavilion was empty.

Ace looked casually at the first picture. It showed a group of men in grey and black uniforms on a stand outside Buckingham Palace. They were grouped around a slender fair-haired man and a small dark woman with a high forehead and tightly drawn-back hair. The woman wore an enormous jewelled crown.

The caption read:

RESTORED TO HIS RIGHTFUL THRONE, HIS MAJESTY KING

EDWARD THE EIGHTH,

ACCOMPANIED

BY HER ROYAL HIGHNESS QUEEN WALLIS, SIGNS THE TREATY OF

ACCORD,

FORMALLY

ESTABLISHING GREAT BRITAIN AS A PROTECTORATE OF THE

GERMAN EMPIRE.

The Doctor's face was grave. "This is all wrong, Ace. There's been temporal interference on a massive scale."

"The Timewyrm?"

The Doctor scowled at the photograph. "I never trusted those Windsors!"

Ace peered at the photographs with mild interest, faint memories stirring of some magazine re-hash of scandals of the past. "Isn't that the Duke of Windsor? Gave up his throne because they wouldn't let him marry some American bird? "The King who Gave All for Love!" "

"He was a vain and silly man," said the Doctor crossly. "And he was a German sympathizer from his early youth. Gave poor old Winston no end of trouble".

Ace shrugged. "So now he's got his throne back. Does it matter? Who cares who's King?"

"A king is a very important symbol - and what matters is what he

symbolizes."

The Doctor followed the photo trail, staring hard at every picture, every caption. A photograph of a tall black-shirted man with a thin moustache was captioned:

PRIME MINISTER MOSLEY ADDRESSES OCCUPIED BRITAIN'S FIRST

NATIONAL

SOCIALIST

PARLIAMENT.

There were lots more pictures, meetings, ceremonies, public occasions.

Mosley was prominent in all of them.

"This bloke Mosley's doing well," said Ace.

"Sir Oswald Mosley," said the Doctor over his shoulder. "Founder of the British Union of Fascists. They interned him when the war started, let him go when it was over. After that he just sort of fizzled out."

"Not here he didn't. He seems to be top of the heap."

The Doctor was looking at a big photo of a miserable-looking gang of men digging an enormous trench.

MEMBERS OF THE BRITISH LABOUR VOLUNTARY FORCE AT WORK

ON THE NEW

COASTAL

FORTIFICATIONS IN CALAIS.

Ace got bored, and went and stood by the door of the pavilion, looking out.

Everything seemed normal enough. The Festival wasn't drawing much of a crowd, but that was hardly surprising considering the filthy weather. Here and there umbrella-carrying visitors, women and children mostly, scurried from one pavilion to another.

The Doctor finished his tour and came over and stood beside her, staring grimly at the swastika on the Skylon. "It's all wrong," he

muttered.

"Maybe it's a joke," said Ace, attempting to cheer him up. "Medical students or something. You know, like chamber pots on church spires."

The Doctor jerked a thumb over his shoulder. "And all this?"

"Another joke?" suggested Ace, without much hope. "You know, "If Hitler had Won". People write books. . . "

The Doctor shook his head. "Nice try, Ace. But it's all too horribly real, I'm afraid."

"But it can't be! The Nazis lost World War Two. We had something to do with it ourselves, remember? Is it the Timewyrm?"

"Possibly. But it doesn't feel like her style."

"Who then?"

The Doctor stared broodingly into time. "Well, there was that meddling Monk of course. And there were others . . .

Ace looked around the Festival. Things were a bit more cheerful now. It had stopped raining, and a fitful sunshine struggled through the clouds. "I'm hungry."

"How can you think of food with a major temporal crisis on our hands?"

"There's a stall over there," said Ace. "How about a cuppa and a bun?"

Picking her way between the puddles, she led the way across the wet concrete to the coffee stall. Behind the counter a round-faced, beaky-nosed little man was moodily polishing tea-spoons. The sign above his head read: *THE COFFEE SHOP-PROP. HARRY GOLD.*

He cheered up at the approach of trade. "Morning, lady and gent!

Brightening up a bit, eh? What can I do you for?" His cockney accent was as rich and thick as a bowl of jellied eels.

"Two teas and two currant buns, please," said Ace.

The little man reached for a huge metal teapot, and added boiling water from an urn. He gave the contents a quick stir and poured the tea into two thick white china cups, adding milk from a jug.

"Help yourself to sugar substitute." He nodded towards a bowl of white powder on the counter. Next to it there was a spoon on the end of a chain.

He took two buns from under a glass stand and put them on two plates on the counter.

"That'll be a tanner, love."

Ace looked blankly at him.

"A tanner, sixpence," said the little man impatiently. "Tea's tuppence, buns a penny."

The Doctor fished in his pocket, peered at a handful of coins from different times and various planets, selected a small, silver coin and handed it over.

"A bob, thank you very much," said the little man, tossing it into the wooden till behind him. He took out an even smaller silver coin and handed it to the Doctor. "And a tanner change!"

The tea was thin and watery and the buns seemed to be made of cardboard. Hungry as she was, Ace had a job to keep chewing, and the Doctor gave up after a single bite.

The little man caught his eye. "I know. Tea tastes like cat pee and the buns like an old soldier's socks."

"Ersatz?" said the Doctor mysteriously.

"What isn't, these days? Not that I'm complaining, mind you," added the little man hurriedly. "Since the dawn of the New Order, we've never been healthier and happier." He chanted the last few words as if repeating a slogan.

"What's ersatz?" asked Ace.

"Imitation," said the Doctor. "Substitute."

"Fake," said the little man bitterly. "Fake tea, fake flour, fake baccy...

He broke off as two youths slouched towards the kiosk. "Oh my gawd, here's trouble. . ."

The new arrivals had brutally cropped hair and big army boots, and they wore khaki battle-dress jackets with black trousers. Arm-bands

had been sewn to the right sleeve of each jacket. They showed a Union Jack with a swastika superimposed. Underneath were the letters BFK. Shouldering Ace and the Doctor aside, they leaned on the kiosk counter.

"Morning boys, what'll it be?" The little man's cheerfulness was as ersatz as his buns.

"Two cuppas," said the first youth.

"And a pound out the till," said the second. They sniggered.

With trembling hands, the little man poured them cups of tea. The first youth snatched up a cup, took a swig - and spat it out, full in the little man's face.

"Cat piss!"

The little man grabbed a tea cloth and mopped his face. To Ace's horrified amazement he actually tried to smile.

"Yeah, you're right, I was saying so just now! Tell you what, I'll make you a fresh pot, hot and strong, how about that? On the house!" He emptied the teapot and began shovelling fresh tea in.

Seething, Ace took a step forward - and felt the Doctor's restraining hand on her arm. His grey eyes were examining the two young men with a cold, remote interest - like a scientist studying microbes on a slide.

Trembling with anger, Ace looked round for help. To her enormous relief she saw the familiar shape of a British bobby not far away. Ace had had her problems with the police in her time, but she was pleased to see this one.

She ran up to the blue-helmeted figure. "We need some help. . ."

Middle-aged, fatherly, reassuringly big and solid, the policeman might have been Dixon of Dock Green in person. He touched his helmet. "Yes, miss?

What seems to be the trouble?"

"It's those two over there. They're bullying the coffee-stall man, trying to get money off him."

The policeman followed her gaze. "Those two in the tunics?"

"Yes, please come!"

The policeman didn't move. "Did you happen to notice armbands on those tunics - with letters underneath?"

"Yes, BF something . . . Why, does it matter?"

"BFK, miss. Stands for Britischer Frei Korps. British Free Corps."

"So does that mean they can do what they like?"

"That's exactly what it means." The policeman's voice took on a formal sound as if reciting some regulation "The authority of the BFK stems directly from the Third Reich and supersedes that of the civilian police in all cases." He returned to his ordinary voice. "I can't interfere, and I don't advise you to either. They might start on you next. I couldn't do anything about that either."

Touching his helmet again, the policeman strolled on his way.

Ace turned and ran back to the kiosk, where the two youths had just finished their tea.

"All right," the first was saying. "Now, how about that pound out the till?"

"Two pounds," said the second. "Better still, make it a fiver."

"Two fivers," said the first.

The little man tried to smile. "Now come on lads, fair's fair. A joke's a joke, and you're welcome to the tea, but..." The second youth looked at the name above the kiosk. "Funny sort of name, Gold. Wouldn't be short for Goldstein, would it?"

The little man went white. Before he could answer, the first youth grabbed him by the front of his jacket and hauled him halfway across the counter.

"Hand over the cash, you lousy kike. Or we'll smash up the stall and you as well - and turn in what's left to the Racial Affairs Bureau."

Ace lunged for the tough holding the little man over the counter. Again the Doctor held her back.

"Wie heissen Sie?" he shouted in a loud, harsh voice. The youth let go of the little man and swung round in amazement. He stared blankly at

the Doctor.

"Wie heissen Sie, dummkopf?" bellowed the Doctor. Stepping smartly forward, he slapped the astonished youth full across the face.

Ace looked on amazed as the Doctor delivered a second slap, a backhander this time. It was a solid blow with all the Doctor's unlikely strength behind it, and it rocked the youth on his feet. He staggered, and blood trickled from his nose.

"Ere," began the second youth uncertainly.

The back of the Doctor's hand smashed him across the mouth. "Sei still!"

He whirled back to the first victim. "Namen?"

"Look, I'm sorry," muttered the youth. "We don't speak German. . . "

"So? Perhaps it is as well." The Doctor sounded like every Gestapo officer in every old war movie Ace had ever seen. "The German language would be polluted by the lips of such scum as you. Your names! And your units!"

He marched up to the first youth, stood on tiptoe and screamed into his face. "Stand to attention when you address me!"

The two lads snapped to a clumsy form of attention.

"Sidney Harris," said the first.

"George Brady," said the second. "London Unit Four, British Free Corps."

"So!" said the Doctor, icily calm again. "And what are your standing orders

– as regards this Festival?"

"Just keep an eye on things," said Sid Harris uneasily. "Watch out for subversive behaviour, signs of disorder."

"Exactly. And do you see any sign of disorder here?" Once again the Doctor's voice became a terrifying screech. "Apart from that which you have created yourselves?"

White-faced and quivering, Sydney and George were too terrified to

speak.

"You will return to your unit," said the Doctor. "You will report to your superior and place yourselves under arrest on charges of attempted extortion." His voice rose again. "Now! Move! At the double! Ein, zwei, ein, zwei!"

To Ace's amazement the two young men turned and ran, disappearing between the pavilions at a stiff jog trot.

The Doctor turned to Harry Gold. "I'm sorry this had to happen. They won't trouble you again."

The little man backed away. "No trouble, sir, I don't want to make trouble.

Good lads I'm sure, just harmless fun. . ."

"Look, it's all right," said Ace. "There's no need to be frightened of us."

The little man stared at her, his trembling lips trying to smile. He picked up a cloth and began polishing his counter, making stiff, jerky movements like a robot.

The Doctor touched her arm. "Come on, Ace."

Sadly Ace moved away. Then she cheered up, thinking of the two yobs doubling away. "Well done, Professor. You certainly saw those two off in style!"

The Doctor gave her one of his enigmatic looks. "Enjoyed it, did you?"

"Yeah, why not?"

"So did I," said the Doctor. "That sort of thing gets enjoyable very quickly.

We scared the man at the tea-stall too - did you enjoy that?"

"All right, I get the point." She gave him a wondering look. "That was quite a performance, Professor, all that screaming and yelling."

"Standard Gestapo technique," said the Doctor absently. "It's called anschnauzen -snorting. Very useful in interrogating prisoners. If you start screaming and yelling and hitting people straight away, they get disorientated."

"That's horrible!"

"That's just for openers," said the Doctor. "Things get nasty after that."

"Where are we going now?"

"Back to the TARDIS."

"We're leaving?"

"I'm not sure. I need to think, and I can't do it out here."

"Why not?"

"Fear - fear and evil," said the Doctor matter-of-factly. "Can't you feel it, Ace? It's in the air, like poison. . . " He marched briskly to the edge of the Festival Grounds, towards the place where they'd left the TARDIS.

2: DEATH BY THE RIVER

"He ordered you to what?"

Lieutenant Anthony Hemmings of the Freikorps stared incredulously at the two miserable figures standing rigidly to attention before his

desk.

"To come straight back here," said Brady.

"And put ourselves under arrest," mumbled Harris.

"On what authority?"

When they didn't reply he rose to his feet, towering menacingly over them.

The contrast could scarcely have been more marked. Privates Harris and Brady wore the coarsely made ill-fitting uniforms of rankers in the BFK, called, though not to their faces, the Black and Tans. They were stocky, pasty faced and pimply.

Lieutenant Hemmings himself was tall and dark and undeniably handsome.

His black uniform, modelled on that of the SS, had been elegantly tailored by a concentration camp inmate formerly of Savile Row. Its immaculate blackness was set off with silver deaths-head badges on collar and cuffs.

His jackboots gleamed evilly. "You were trying to extort money, of course,"

he drawled.

"No, sir," protested Brady.

Hemmings ignored him. "But you've committed a far worse crime than just extortion - by allowing yourselves, and therefore the whole Freikorps, to be made fools of! Did this man identify himself? Did he show any papers?"

Brady shook his head. "If you'd heard him, sir, he was someone all right. . .

"

"He was bluffing!" shouted Hemmings. "And who do you think would have the nerve for a bluff like that? A member of the resistance. Almost certainly a very senior member. Exactly the sort of man we're stationed on the Festival site to catch and you let him get away!"

The two privates stood there in terrified silence. Hemmings studied

them, savouring the moment. "Now, what am I to do with you? I should really have you shot, but you're hardly worth the cost of the bullets. Hanging by piano wire's cheaper, but it's rather slow. . . " He paused, prolonging the agony. "Go back to barracks and report to the quartermaster sergeant.

You're on permanent fatigues in the toilet block for the rest of the week."

The two privates crashed to attention, saluted and doubled thankfully out of the office.

Hemmings smiled coldly as he watched them go. They'd been extorting money of course, they all did it. No one really minded. It was one of the perks of service in the ranks of the Freikorps. A little extortion, the occasional rape, the fun of arresting and beating up anyone whose face or clothes or colour you didn't like. It did no real harm, just ensured that the populace hated the Freikorps even more than the occupying power. By contrast, the Regular Army troops, the Wehrmacht, were almost popular.

Hemmings reached for his cap and gloves. It was time, he decided, to take a look round the Festival site. He hadn't much liked being assigned to Festival duty. He regarded the whole Festival as a waste of time, a sick joke on the part of the Occupying Power. These days the British had precious little to celebrate. But to capture a senior resistance man would be a considerable coup. Lost in dreams of promotion and glory he strode from the office.

It was very quiet down by the river. Mist rose from the surface of the water, drifted between the piles of bricks and stacks of timber.

Suddenly the Doctor stopped. "Wait!"

"What's up, Professor?"

"Sssh! Just listen!"

After a moment Ace heard footsteps coming towards them, the sound of harsh, panting breathing. A man appeared from out of the mist dodging between the timber stacks and the concrete blocks. He wore a dark overcoat and a homburg hat, and he was small, dark and pudgy, with rimless glasses.

Could be a site foreman, thought Ace, but why's he running? Then she saw other figures at the man's heels, hunting him like wolves.

The Doctor was already hurrying towards the little man. At the sight of him the running man's face twisted in fear. It was clear he thought this was another of his enemies, cutting off his escape. He turned and ran in the only direction open to him - towards the river.

Just as the little man reached the edge of the embankment a tall white-haired figure sprang from behind a timber stack. His arm rose and fell. The little man stiffened and plunged over the edge of the embankment. The tall figure dodged back between the timber stacks and disappeared.

By the time the Doctor and Ace arrived, the little man was half in and half out of the water, twitching feebly like a stranded fish. The river was swirling around the lower part of his body, tugging at the skirts of the long overcoat.

"Quick, before the current gets him," shouted the Doctor. "Hold my ankles."

The Doctor threw himself forwards, stretching out, head first down the slippery wet concrete slope. Ace grabbed his ankles, noticing, not for the first time, that the Doctor had terrible taste in socks. The Doctor reached downwards, straining to grasp the little man's outstretched hand. Their hands touched, then the Doctor seemed to fumble. The little man slid suddenly into the river, and was immediately carried away by the fast-moving tide.

Ace hauled the Doctor back up the slope and he scrambled to his feet.

"I thought you'd got him..."

"So did I - I thought he was trying to grip my hand, but he was giving me this." The Doctor held out his hand revealing a small black leather folder.

He flipped it open. One side held some kind of pass, the other an ornate badge embossed with a golden swastika. "It seemed to be important to him. Somehow I got hold of this and lost hold of him."

Ace could see the body, turning over and over in the rushing river like a piece of driftwood. Soon it would be out of sight. "Shouldn't we go in after him?" she said unenthusiastically.

"No point. He died as he handed me that folder. I saw the life go out of his eyes -it's quite unmistakable."

They heard a distant shout. "You there! Halt! Halt or we fire!" Uniformed figures appeared on the far side of the site, running towards them.

The Doctor thrust the folder into his pocket. "Run!" They ran, dodging between the brick stacks and the piles of timber. They came at last to the gap in the fence and they both nipped through it.

"What do we do now, Professor?" The Doctor glanced over his shoulder.

"The trouble is, those people are between us and the TARDIS. We'll have to wait till they move on, then try to work our way behind them. Meanwhile, I suggest we join the happy throng for a bit."

Ace looked around. There were a few more people strolling round the Festival site by now. Still women and children and old people, she noticed.

"You couldn't call this lot a throng, exactly, could you? And most of them don't seem all that happy either."

"Neither would you be, after ten years under the Nazis. Come on, let's take a look at the Dome of Discovery."

Ace found the Dome of Discovery almost as boring as the earlier exhibition.

It was filled with maps, charts and models, most of them devoted to a newly designed space rocket. Apparently the Nazis planned to mark this Festival year by landing a man on the moon.

"This is terrible," muttered the Doctor.

"I thought you liked this kind of stuff!"

"Don't you see what's happening? The Nazis were doing pioneering work in rocketry by the end of the war - using them to deliver massive warheads on London. The Allies had nothing nearly so advanced. If their armies hadn't overrun the missile sites, Hitler might still have won."

"Well, he did win, didn't he, here?"

"They were working on atomic energy too. Think of it, Ace! A massive atomic research programme, driven by the ambitions of a war-mad

megalomaniac dictator with an unlimited supply of slave labour and the resources of half the world at his command! It's madness. It's got to be stopped."

The Doctor's voice had risen, and a bespectacled little man nearby looked round in alarm. He scuttled away, looking, thought Ace, exactly like a startled mouse.

She turned back to the Doctor. "Stopped, how?"

The Doctor looked round the pavilion. "What we're seeing here are the effects of interference. I've got to work my way back to the causes, find out who interfered, and when, and why..."

"And then put things back the way they were?"

"If I can. Interference with an established time-stream is always incredibly dangerous - and interfering with someone else's interference could be catastrophic. We'd better have another go at getting back to the TARDIS.

With any luck that patrol will have moved on by now."

As they moved towards the exit Ace said suddenly, "Hang on a minute, aren't we forgetting something?"

"What?"

"Well, we saw a murder just now."

"So?"

"Ought we to do something about it?"

"Like what? Play Sherlock Holmes? Go back to the scene of the crime and look for clues?"

"Report it to the authorities at least."

"And answer all the usual boring questions? Who are you, where do you come from, why haven't you got any identification papers and why are you wearing those funny clothes?"

Ace nodded. "It still doesn't seem right, ignoring someone's death. I wonder who he was, why he was killed."

"If that folder's anything to go on, he was a Nazi official. Presumably

he was killed by some kind of resistance movement. Or perhaps even by other Nazis, political rivals. Human life means very little under this kind of regime."

"Human life doesn't seem to mean much to you either, Professor."

He gave her an impatient look. "The crime I'm concerned with now involves millions, billions of lives. I've no time to worry about one squalid little murder."

"Aren't you even curious?"

"No, not really. Are you?"

"I suppose I am. We saw him die - and we don't even know who he was..."

They had reached the entrance by now, and as they emerged into the watery sunlight an excited voice shouted, "That's them! They're the ones!"

Booted footsteps pounded towards them.

A four-man squad at his heels, Lieutenant Hemmings was patrolling the Festival site. Everything seemed quiet enough but then, with a Freikorps patrol around, it would be. He needed more and better informers, he decided, it was the only way. He'd reached the Dome of Discovery by now and, as if in answer to his thoughts, a furtive figure hurried up to him.

"Lieutenant Hemmings - it is Lieutenant Hemmings, isn't it?"

Motioning the patrol to a halt, Hemmings looked down at the mousy little figure. "Yes?"

"Don't you remember me, Lieutenant? Name of Arnold. I helped you with that black market case last month."

Pleased with the coincidence, Hemmings said, "Do you know, I was just thinking about you!"

Arnold looked alarmed. "Me, Sir?"

"Well, you, or someone like you. You've turned in quite a few of your fellow citizens in your time."

"I try to do my duty by the Reich," said Arnold primly.

"And turn a profit in the process. You've pocketed some nice little rewards, haven't you? How would you like to earn another one? There's a man I'm looking for." He passed on the description of the Doctor he had been given by Harris and Brady. "Apparently there's a girl with him. . . "

Arnold was trembling with excitement. "I've just seen them, Lieutenant!"

"When? Where?"

"They were in the Dome of Discovery, talking treason! I was coming to look for you."

Hemmings turned to the patrol leader. "Cover all the entrances and we'll move in."

Before the patrol could move, Arnold shouted, "That's them! They're the ones!" He pointed to two figures at the entrance to the Dome.

Hemmings ran for the entrance, the patrol at his heels. In a matter of seconds the man and the girl were surrounded.

Arnold pointed to them with a trembling finger. "That's them!" he repeated.

"They were talking against the Glorious Reich, against the Fuehrer himself.

The man said he was a madman and had to be stopped."

Hemmings looked curiously at the man and the girl. There was something strange about them, he realized. Not just the oddity of their clothes, there was something more. Suddenly he realized what it was. They weren't afraid.

"Is this true?" he asked.

"Absolute rubbish!" said the man. "What I actually said was that anyone who opposed the Glorious Reich was a madman."

"You attacked two of my men, earlier, by the coffee stall impersonating a Party Official in the process."

"I impersonated no one. Ask them. They were committing a crime and I simply did my duty as a citizen."

Hemmings looked thoughtfully at him and then shook his head. "No, it won't do you know. It's just not convincing."

"It's our word against theirs," said the girl. "And why believe this man rather than us?"

"Well, he's one of my regular informants, you see. Quite a valuable little Judas, aren't you, Mr. Arnold?"

Far from being offended at this description, little Mr. Arnold nodded proudly.

"I'm quite willing to swear the usual Deposition of Accusation. I'll get the reward all right, won't I?"

"Yes, of course, Mr. Arnold. Just as soon as they've confessed and been executed."

"How longs that likely to be?"

Hemmings studied the two prisoners, estimating their powers of resistance.

Despite their air of confidence, they could be broken. Soon they would learn to be afraid. "Oh, tomorrow, I should think. Next day at the latest.

We're not too busy just now." In a bored voice he went on, "I am Lieutenant Hemmings of the British Free Corps. You are under arrest, on charges of treason against the Reich! Have you anything to say?"

"Look, we were only talking," said the girl. Ridiculously she added, "It's a free country, isn't it?"

"No," said Lieutenant Hemmings. "I'm afraid it isn't." He turned to the waiting guards. "All right, bring them along."

The girl tried to run. At a nod from Hemmings, one of the patrol grabbed her arm and twisted it up behind her. She kicked out backwards, hard, catching him on the shin. He yelped and jumped back, and another guard drew his truncheon.

"Stop this nonsense at once," said the man in a sharply authoritative voice.

The guard froze, truncheon in midair.

The man turned to Hemmings. "I assume you don't particularly want a public disturbance in a place dedicated to the glories of the Thousand Year Reich? I suggest we clear this matter up at your headquarters."

In an attempt to regain the initiative, Hemmings turned to the patrol leader.

"Bring them to the main gate. I want these two back at HQ."

"Very well," said the prisoner, as if giving permission. Taking the girl's arm he marched her away, and Hemmings arid the others had no alternative but to follow. It almost seemed as if the prisoner was in charge.

The prisoners were taken to the huge black Mercedes limousine parked by the Festival entrance. A swastika pennant dangled from a little flagstaff on the bonnet. Hemmings put the two prisoners on the back seat, a guard on each side. Two more guards sat facing them. He was convinced he had caught a big fish and he was taking no chances. He took his place in the front beside the black-uniformed chauffeur, and the big car moved smoothly away. As always, Hemmings felt a little thrill of pride when armed sentries gave the Hitler salute as the car swept through the gates.

As they drove through the back streets, he glanced idly at the devastation all around him. There were bomb sites and shattered buildings everywhere.

Half-ruined buildings had been patched up and re-inhabited, and here and there little shops and market stalls traded in the ruins. The people looked grim-faced and weary, and the few shops that were open had long queues outside. It was all familiar territory to Hemmings. He had grown up a ragged, starving orphan in streets like these.

The male prisoner leaned forward and tapped Hemmings on the shoulder.

"Not much progress with the rebuilding," he said reprovingly.

"Rumour has it the Fuehrer still hasn't made up his mind."

"About what?" asked the girl.

"Whether to rebuild completely in Neo-Nazi Classical Speer drew up plans some time ago - or to destroy London completely and let New Berlin stand alone."

The girl was obviously horrified. "You're not serious."

"Oh yes. It was touch and go with Paris for a while, you know - until the Fuehrer decided that New Berlin was so much superior that Paris could stay as a foil. Until he decides about London, things are being left pretty much as they were."

They drove over Waterloo Bridge, bomb-battered but still intact, turned left along what was left of the Strand and right into an imposing building set back from the road. The limousine drew up and everyone got out. The male prisoner looked up at the arched stone doorway, which was draped with an immense swastika banner.

"Savoy Hotel," he said approvingly. "Nothing but the best."

Hemmings smiled. "I'm afraid the Gestapo bagged the Ritz." He marched across the ornate hotel foyer which was filled, as always, with black-uniformed figures and draped with still more swastika banners, and he opened an inconspicuous side door revealing a flight of concrete steps.

"I'm afraid it's the cellars for you, not the riverside suite." He led them down the steps, along a long featureless corridor and opened the door to a small bare room. The guards shoved them inside and slammed the door behind them.

Hemmings looked thoughtfully at the closed cell door. Posting one man on guard and dismissing the others, he headed upstairs for his office. He needed to think, to plan his strategy. There was something very odd about these two, he decided. But soon he would break them, and tear out all their secrets. For the time being, they could wait - and wait.

3: CAPTIVES

Ace drew a nought, the Doctor drew a cross and a line, and Ace threw down her pencil in disgust. "You've won again!"

She looked at the bare concrete wall, which was entirely covered in noughts-and-crosses squares. "I make that a hundred and forty-seven games, Professor. You've won seven, and we've had a hundred and forty draws." She looked round the room for the hundredth time. Besides the concrete walls, there was the wooden bench they were sitting on, and a bare light bulb hanging from a flex in the ceiling - that was it.

"What are they going to do to us, Professor? Why's nothing happening?"

"Nothing's supposed to happen, at least not at first. This is stage one. They just leave us alone to work ourselves up into a state of fear, terror and apprehension." The Doctor put his hands behind his head and yawned.

"Ah, right," said Ace. "Professor?"

"What?"

"All the people we've had trouble with have been English, not German.

Those yobs at the coffee stall, the ones who picked us up just now. . . "

"They're all BFK," said the Doctor. "Britischer Freikorps. It started with the war. They used to go round the camps, trying to get prisoners to change sides."

"Did they get many takers?"

"Hardly any, not then. But in this reality, England lost the war about ten years ago. Those lads have grown up under this regime. Offer people extra pay, extra rations and a chance to push their fellow citizens around, and you'll always get a few takers."

"I suppose you will." Ace stared gloomily at the noughts-and-crosses-covered concrete.

"We could start another wall," offered the Doctor.

The door flew open with a crash and a brutal-looking guard in the parti-coloured Free Corps uniform stood looming over them, brandishing a riding crop. "We've got you now, you swine!" he roared. "You're in the hands of the Free Corps, and you can expect no mercy!"

"Ah, stage two," said the Doctor. "Now, pay attention, Ace!"

The guard began a long, rambling, loudly screamed tirade. It seemed to go on forever, and Ace found herself getting a headache - and earache as well. At the top of his voice the guard shouted that they were Jewish Bolshevist traitors, that the game was up, and that their associates had all been rounded up and made full confessions. "Only by fully confessing your own filthy crimes and throwing yourselves on the mercy of the all-powerful Reich can you hope to save your miserable lives!"

He went on in this way for what seemed like a very long time, face scarlet, eyes bulging, voice cracking - there were even flecks of foam on his lips.

Sitting on the bench, the Doctor studied him with the politely interested expression of someone watching other people's kids perform in the school concert.

Eventually the guard ran out of threats, insults and breath. "Are you going to confess?" he croaked exhaustedly. "Well? What do you say?"

"Not bad... Not bad at all," said the Doctor judicially. "Good, well sustained volume, and I like the foam on the lips. You'll have to watch the tendency to hesitation, deviation and repetition, though." He thought for a moment. "I'd say, oh six out of ten!"

The guard gaped at him in astonishment, mouth opening and closing silently.

"Mind you," the Doctor went on, "to be fair, it's hard to do really good

anschnauzen when you're working in English. German's a much better language for screaming at people." As if to prove his words the Doctor leapt to his feet, thrust his face into the guard's and screamed, "Heraus, schweinhund! Raus! Raus!"

The guard jumped back a foot, turned and fled out of the door, slamming it behind him.

Ace shook her head. "I thought they only said Schweinhund! in old movies!

When can we expect stage three?"

"Any minute now," said the Doctor.

A terrible scream came from somewhere nearby. It was followed by shouted threats, more screams and the thud of blows.

"Right on schedule," said the Doctor. "The Terrifying Noises Off." After a while the noises died away and there was a long, sinister silence.

"This is getting steadily nastier," said Ace. "What's stage four?"

"Ah, now stage four," began the Doctor. "Properly done, it can be very artistic."

Before he could go on, the door opened and someone was thrust inside.

The newcomer was a youngish man in ragged clothes. He looked in very bad shape. One eye was swollen and half closed, his shirt front was soaked in bright scarlet blood, and beneath his torn shirt they could see livid weals on his chest. He slumped on the bench.

"Got you too, did they?"

"What happened?" asked the Doctor.

"They picked me up with the rest of my group... Someone must have talked. . . "

The Doctor nodded, but didn't reply.

After a while the young man said, "I don't know you, do I? Which lot are you with?"

"No lot," said Ace. "We're on our own."

Ignoring her, the young man turned to the Doctor. "Are you with Colonel Gubbins" people?"

The Doctor still didn't answer.

"Suit yourself," said the young man painfully. "But if I were you, I'd talk -or you'll get what I did. I held out as long as I could, but I told them in the end. It's just for their records, they know it all anyway, names, places, the lot... Like I said, someone's talked already, why suffer for nothing?" He collapsed, shivering, in his corner.

Ace turned to the Doctor. "Can't we do something for him?"

The Doctor, however, was looking at the young man with critical detachment. "No more than five out of ten, old chap. The black eye and the bruises are good, but that blood's quite the wrong colour, far too bright.

Ersatz, I suppose? And there were too many questions. You should have spun us more of a yarn, gained our confidence first." He turned to Ace.

"This is stage four, Ace: the good old beaten-up fellow prisoner trick."

Abandoning his shivering the young man stood up. He rapped on the door, a short staccato sequence. It opened, revealing Lieutenant Hemmings.

"No good, they've tumbled," said the young man.

Hemmings glared furiously at the Doctor and Ace. "I imagine you think you're pretty clever? Well, let me tell you something. You'll be called up for intensive interrogation pretty soon. Unless you tell us exactly what we want to know, you'll end up looking like him. Only in your case, the blood and the bruises will be real."

Hemmings looked as if he was enjoying the prospect. He jerked his head at the young man, who scuttled out of the door. Hemmings followed, slamming and locking the door behind him.

"That veneer of civilized charm seems to be wearing a bit thin," said the Doctor cheerfully.

"He's right, though, isn't he?" said Ace. "All this war-of-nerves business is just the beginning. They'll start the real rough stuff soon."

"It's very possible," admitted the Doctor.

"Professor, what are we going to do?"

"I suppose we'd better escape."

Ace stared at him. "Just like that?"

"Just like this!" The Doctor gazed thoughtfully up at the ceiling. "Ah, yes, that ought to do the trick." He produced his handful of intergalactic small change and selected the small silver coin the man had given him at the coffee stall. He fished a pencil-sized torch from another pocket, turned it on, and handed it to Ace. Then he went to the doorway and turned off the light.

"Good job this place wasn't designed as a prison, or this switch'd be on the other side of the door."

He pulled the bench out from the wall until it was under the dangling light bulb, wrapped a handkerchief round his hand, jumped up and took out the bulb. "Now, on no account try this at home, Ace," he said solemnly.

Shining the torch, Ace watched in fascination as the Doctor balanced the little coin on the connecting end of the bulb, and thrust the bulb back into the socket, turning till it locked back into place. Jumping down the Doctor flattened himself to one side of the door, beckoning to Ace to stand beside him. He took back the torch, turned it off and returned it to his pocket, leaving them in darkness. Then he rapped sharply on the door, using the same staccato sequence of knocks that had been used by the fake prisoner. Nothing happened. The Doctor rapped again. They heard jackbooted feet on the stone floor of the corridor.

Hemmings" voice called sharply, "Yes? What do you want?"

"Thought he wouldn't be far away!" whispered the Doctor. He rapped on the door for the third time. They heard the key turn in the lock and the door opened. Hemmings appeared, framed in the doorway by the light from the corridor, an automatic pistol in his hand. He peered suspiciously into the darkened room - and the Doctor flicked the light switch. There was a bang, a flash from the ceiling, and all the lights in the corridor went out.

The Doctor slipped past Hemmings and gave him a shove in the back that sent him staggering into the centre of the room. He stumbled over

the bench and fell with a crash, the automatic clattering from his hand.

Snatching it up, Ace joined the Doctor in the darkened corridor. He slammed and locked the door.

"This way!" Grabbing her hand the Doctor pulled her back along the way they had come, brushing past the confused guard in the darkness. They climbed the stairs and emerged into the hotel foyer, where everything seemed normal. The Doctor looked at the gun in Ace's hand.

"Put that thing away, this isn't the OK Corral!"

Ace thrust the gun into her pocket and they strolled through the crowded foyer and out onto the hotel forecourt. A black limousine with an SS driver was parked outside, and to Ace's horror the Doctor opened the rear door and climbed inside, dragging her in after him. He leaned forward, tapped the black-uniformed chauffeur on the shoulder and snapped, "Nach Festival, bitte."

The chauffeur turned and gaped at him.

"Nach Festival!" barked the Doctor. "Schnell!"

The limousine pulled away. Ace gave the Doctor a horrified look. "What do you think you're doing, Professor?"

Leaning back in the cushions, the Doctor said, "In an authoritarian society, people tend to obey the voice of authority. It can be very useful at times."

"You're taking an awful chance."

"Look at it this way, Ace. No one would dare to commandeer an official car unless they had the right to do so. We've just done it - so we must have the authority to do what we've done, otherwise we wouldn't have done it!"

Ace felt there was a flaw in there somewhere, but she couldn't find it. They sat in silence as the car drove along the Strand, over the bridge and back on to the Festival site, passing the saluting sentries. It parked just inside the gates.

"Wait here," ordered the Doctor and the chauffeur touched his cap. The Doctor marched briskly away, Ace hurrying after him.

The Festival was a little busier now, with depressed-looking groups of people visiting the various pavilions.

They turned the corner of the last pavilion, went through the gap in the fence, and walked along the river bank through the building site and finally reached the spot by the river where they'd left the TARDIS.

It was gone.

4: THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

The tall white-haired old man who preferred to be known as Pop strolled slowly through the Festival site. He wore paint-stained overalls and a battered cloth cap and he carried several pots of paint and a big paintbrush. It was like a pass signed by old Adolf himself, he thought. Or better still, a cloak of invisibility. He was a painter, off to paint something.

Stood to reason, didn't it? Nodding to a passing Freikorps patrolman, the old man climbed through the gap in the fence and walked along the river bank.

He was making for the place where some very strange things had been happening. A man had gone into the river, and a man and a girl had suddenly appeared from nowhere. Something else had appeared as

well, an odd-looking blue police box. And there it was!

Pop marched up to it and tried the door. Locked. He put his hand on the side and felt a warmth, a faint hum of power. It was as if the thing were alive . . . He stood and looked at it for a while. He needed an excuse to hang around. He decided to paint the box white. He took his brush from the pot and slapped a broad streak of white paint on the side.

The paint just fell away.

He tried again.

The same thing happened. The box simply repelled, rejected the paint.

Pop scratched his head under the cap and moved away. There was a stretch of riverside railing nearby, newly painted black and red in honour of the Festival. Black and red were Nazi colours, and he decided the fence would look better in red, white and blue. He set to work. For quite a long while nothing happened. Then a Freikorps lorry came jolting across the site from the other side. A Freikorps patrol under the command of a sergeant jumped down from the lorry and surrounded the blue box. They tried the door. It was locked. They tried to smash the door down. It refused to smash. For a while they stood round in a circle, arguing furiously. Then they rigged up a block and tackle and under the command of the cursing sergeant they heaved the blue box, which seemed to be astonishingly heavy, on to the back of the lorry. They lashed it down, jumped on to the lorry and drove away.

For a time things were quiet again. Pop painted peacefully on. Then a man and a girl came hurrying along the path. They stopped at the spot where the box had been. They boggled. They too started arguing. Pop went placidly on with his painting.

The Doctor stared at the spot where the TARDIS wasn't, rubbing his chin.

"Agley is the word, I think, Ace. . ."

"Come again, Professor?"

"Agley - what the best laid plans of mice and men gang aft, if you remember."

"It's the TARDIS that's ganged - gone, I mean. Where is it?"

"Well, it isn't here. . ."

"Brilliant, Professor."

"So someone's moved it."

"Even more amazing!"

"So all we need to know is who and where to."

"How do we discover that?"

"By a brilliant new scientific method," said the Doctor. "It's called asking someone." He looked round and saw a tall, cloth-capped, overalled old man painting a section of railing not far away.

The Doctor strode over. "Been here long, mate?"

"Who wants to know?"

"Festival Admin," announced the Doctor. "Exhibit gone missing."

"Well, I ain't got it."

"Police box of the future, big blue job, seen it?"

"They took it away."

"I gathered that. Who did?"

"Lot of them Free Corps lads came with a lorry. Hoisted it on board and made off."

"Another cock-up," said the Doctor cheerfully. "Thanks, Pop, I'll sort it."

"You want to watch they don't sort you out. Nasty lot, them Free Corps. Still you know that, don't you?"

"Do I?"

"Well, they nicked you earlier on, didn't they? Now here you are, large as life, asking about blue boxes."

"It was all a misunderstanding," said the Doctor. "I was helping them with their enquiries."

The old man went on painting. "There's a lot of misunderstanding

about these days."

"I know," said the Doctor. He looked hard at the old man. "Somebody misunderstood himself right into the river this morning.

"That right?"

The Doctor nodded. "I was there." He paused. "So were you, weren't you?"

"If you fancy a cuppa later on," said the old man, "try Ma Barker's Caff, under the arches. Say Pop sent you." In quite a different voice he added,

"We provide rather a decent brewup, actually - a cut above this ersatz stuff."

Touching his cap to Ace, he picked up his paint pots and brush and strolled away.

"What was all that about?" asked Ace.

"Well, I'm not sure," said the Doctor thoughtfully. "But I rather think we may have made contact with the resistance."

"He just happened to be standing there?"

"I doubt if there's any just happened about it. He was waiting to see if anyone turned up looking for the TARDIS."

"How do you know?"

"That stretch of railings had already been painted perfectly well when we were here earlier," said the Doctor. "It really didn't need painting again -and did you see what colours he was painting it? Besides, I saw him when that chap went into the river. I rather think he was the one who stabbed him."

Ace rubbed her eyes. "So much has happened I'd almost forgotten him."

"So had I," admitted the Doctor. "Ace, I'm a fool." He began searching frantically through his pockets, eventually coming up with the black leather folder the dying man had given him. He opened it and studied the gold swastika badge, noticing for the first time the lettering embossed under the badge. He read it aloud. "Reichsinspektor-General."

"Sounds important," said Ace.

"It was vitally important to him, even when he was dying. And he was important too -important enough for the resistance to assassinate him right here at the Festival. It's worth a gamble. . . " The Doctor closed the folder and put it back in his pocket. "And this might just be our ace in the hole - if you'll pardon the expression. Come on!" He set off down the path.

Ace hurried after him. "Where to?"

"Back to the Freikorps HQ," said the Doctor. "I hope the car's still waiting."

"What was that about gambling?" asked Ace suspiciously. "You know what you're gambling with, don't you? Our lives!"

Obsessed with his latest scheme, the Doctor didn't even reply.

The car was still parked by the gate, and this time the chauffeur obeyed without question when the Doctor ordered him to take them back to the Savoy. As they drove out of the gate the driver had to pull aside sharply as an army lorry came rocketing through. It was packed with Freikorps troops and sitting beside the driver in the cab, was a white-faced and furious figure.

Ace nudged the Doctor. "Did you see who that was?"

The Doctor nodded. "After his escaped prisoners, no doubt. The right move, of course, but just a little mistimed."

The desk clerk at the hotel had been having a difficult day. First Lieutenant Hemmings had positively burst into the foyer looking disgracefully dishevelled, and demanded news of a man and a girl he'd brought in earlier. When the clerk told him they'd just left in an official car he'd seemed most put out. After saying a number of most ungentlemanly things, Lieutenant Hemmings had stormed out again. Now the whole place was in an uproar because General Strasser, the Commanding Officer, together with his whole entourage of staff officers, was just about to set off for a tour of the Festival. Apparently there was some problem about his car and another was being found. Once they'd all gone, maybe he'd have some peace and quiet...

Suddenly he saw the man and girl Lieutenant Hemmings had been after marching back into the hotel. To the clerk's horror, the man strode straight up to the desk, and fixed him with a cold grey stare.

"I wish to see the Commanding Officer of the Britischer Freikorps -

immediately."

The desk clerk looked scornfully down his aristocratic nose. "I'm afraid that won't be possible."

The man lowered his voice to a sinister whisper. "For your sake, young man, it had better be possible - or perhaps you fancy a trip to the Continent in the Volunteer Labour Corps? Nice healthy outdoor work, you know. . . "

The clerk recoiled. "I assure you sir, it really isn't possible. General Strasser is just about to leave the hotel on a tour of the Festival site. There he comes now." He pointed to a large, portly man in the uniform of an SS

General coming down the staircase, surrounded by an entourage of colonels, captains and lieutenants.

As the General reached the bottom of the staircase, the stranger marched up to him and clicked his heels. "General Strasser?"

The General came to a halt, his officers grouped round him protectively.

"Yes?"

"I must speak with you immediately."

A captain stepped forward. "The General is busy. Make an appointment with his office. Possibly in a week or two. . . " Ignoring him, the stranger fixed the General with his steely grey stare. "Immediately, if you please, General. My business is extremely urgent."

Impressed by the incisive manner, the General said uneasily, "And the nature of this urgent business?,

"It concerns the security of the Reich."

The stranger produced the black leather folder, gave the General a quick glimpse of a gold badge, closed the folder and put it away.

The effect was amazing. The General came to attention and clicked his heels in response. "My time of course is at your disposal, Herr . . . ?" He raised his eyebrows interrogatively.

"You may address me as the Doctor."

"Herr Doktor," continued the General. "But I was just about to leave for a tour of the Festival site. As a matter of fact I'm late already, my car went missing. . ."

"It would not be advisable to visit the Festival at present," snapped the Doctor. "At the moment a hunt is taking place for two dangerous prisoners who have just escaped from your headquarters."

The General smiled. "Nonsense, Herr Doktor. Prisoners in my custody do not escape." He looked at his officers. "Do they, gentlemen?"

There was a stirring at the edge of the group. A lieutenant whispered to a captain, who whispered to a major, who whispered to a colonel.

"Well, do they?" snapped the General.

The Colonel cleared his throat. "It appears, General, that two prisoners were brought in earlier, by Lieutenant Hemmings. They subsequently escaped, and Lieutenant Hemmings has taken a detachment to the Festival site in order to search for them."

"Why was I not told?" bellowed the General. He controlled himself with an effort. "It appears, Herr Doktor, that you are rather better informed about events in my headquarters than I am myself!"

The Doctor gave him a sinister smile. "It is my business to be well informed."

The General turned to an aide. "Inform the Festival authorities that my visit is postponed. Inform me, immediately if you would be so kind, when the escaped prisoners are recaptured. There must be a full investigation. Send Lieutenant Hemmings to me the moment he returns."

There was a flurry of salutes and heel-clicking, and the General said, "If you will be good enough to accompany me, Herr Doktor?"

As the Doctor moved forward the girl came to join him.

The General raised his eyebrows. "And this young lady. . .?"

"Is my personal assistant," said the Doctor. "She accompanies me at all times."

"Naturlich, " murmured the General. "Gnadiges Fraulein!"

He clicked his heels and bowed and all the colonels and the majors and the captains and the lieutenants did the same.

Ace was quietly seething as she followed the Doctor and the General up the stairs. She knew quite well what they'd all been thinking. If the Doctor, or anyone else for that matter, thought she was going to be relegated to the status of attendant bimbo they had another think coming.

The General led them to a luxurious suite of rooms overlooking the river.

Dismissing his entourage he settled the Doctor and Ace in comfortable armchairs and sat behind an ornate eighteenth-century desk.

"Well, this is quite an honour," he said. "There have been rumours of a distinguished visitor for some time. But I must confess, I didn't expect the Reichsinspektor General."

The Doctor produced another of his sinister smiles. "No one expects the Reichsinspektor General!"

"Oh, quite so, quite so," said the General hurriedly. "One announces a visit, everything is prepared for one's arrival, the administrative dust is swept under the carpet... An unexpected descent on the other hand can usually be relied on to produce a few surprises."

"Like two members of the Freikorps bullying a stall-keeper at the Festival –

and attempting to extort money," said Ace, doing her best to match the Doctor's sinister manner. "I take it that is not part of their official duties?"

The Doctor put his fingers together and gazed at the decorated ceiling. "Ah yes, thank you for reminding me, Fraulein. The names were Harris and Brady, General, London Unit Four. I sent them back to their units under arrest." He looked severely at the General. "Incidents of this kind may seem trivial, but they help to foment unrest amongst the civilian population -

and unrest is the breeding-ground for resistance. It is necessary that those representing the Third Reich conduct themselves with the utmost correctness at all times."

The General made a note. "I will check up on the matter immediately.

You will understand, Herr Reichsinspektor. . ."

The Doctor raised a finger and shook his head.

"Herr Doktor, that is," said the General hurriedly. "When one recruits from the native population as we do, it's hard to find the best type of men, particularly in the lower ranks. We have some very fine English officers however..."

"Like Lieutenant Hemmings?" said Ace.

The Doctor raised his hand. "We shall come to Lieutenant Hemmings in a moment. There are far more serious matters to discuss - such as the British resistance movement."

The General smiled confidently, leaning back in his chair. "I don't know what kind of rumours you've been hearing in Berlin, Herr Doktor - but the so-called British resistance movement scarcely exists. A handful of ragged fanatics cowering in the ruins, the tattered remnants of Colonel Gubbins"

stay-behind units . . . Believe me, they are no real problem."

"Indeed?" said the Doctor icily. He leaned forward, staring hard at the General. "Then permit me to inform you, Herr General, that my arrival may have been unexpected to you, but it was by no means a surprise to the British resistance. They were waiting for me - and they tried to kill me a few minutes after I arrived on the Festival site."

"This is shocking - unheard of!" said the General. "The attempt was a failure?"

The Doctor sighed. "Obviously."

"Yes of course, forgive me. May I enquire how you so fortunately escaped?"

"I killed the would-be assassin with his own knife and threw the body into the river," said the Doctor casually. "No doubt it will emerge in time."

The General rose and began pacing about the room. "I am shocked, horrified that such a thing could happen in my jurisdiction. I cannot sufficiently apologise - and as for what they will say in Berlin. . . "

"Berlin does not need to know," said the Doctor. "At least, not

necessarily."

The General stopped his pacing, a gleam of hope in his eye. "I don't understand, Herr Doktor."

The Doctor said confidentially, "It is my belief that local problems are best solved at the local level. If I send back a report that the Freikorps is out of control and London riddled with resistance activity - well, you can imagine how unfortunate would be the consequences."

"I can indeed," said the General. He shuddered.

"But," said the Doctor meaningfully, "if you and I work together to solve these difficulties . . . If I can soon send back a report that the Freikorps is a model force and that resistance activity has been eliminated . . . How much more uplifting for me, for you, and for our glorious Reich!"

"Indeed yes," said the General. "You are a man of great and noble understanding, Herr Doktor."

The Doctor looked sternly at him. "However, such a solution will require your fullest, unreserved cooperation, Herr General."

"Anything," said the General. "You have only to ask."

"I shall require papers and passes for myself and my assistant. We must be allowed to go anywhere, to see everything. I shall need research facilities, accommodation, transport. . . "

"Anything," said the General again. "The resources of Occupied Britain are at your command." He picked up his pencil. "In what name should your pass be made out?"

The Doctor considered. "Schmidt," he said. "Herr Doktor Johann Schmidt."

"And the young lady?"

"Fraulein Dorothy Schmidt - my niece."

"Naturlich, " murmured the General, making a note of the names.

There was a knock on the door.

The General frowned. "I said I was not to be disturbed." He raised his voice. "Who is there?"

"Your pardon, my general," said the voice from outside. "You gave orders that I should report to you immediately on my return."

Ace looked at the Doctor in horror. It was the voice of Lieutenant Hemmings.

5: THE VIP

Brushing at his uniform and straightening his cap, Lieutenant Hemmings waited with painful apprehension outside the General's door. The General, not for the first time, had issued contradictory orders. He was not to be disturbed and Hemmings was to report at once. Damned either way, Hemmings had decided it would be safer to report. He heard a murmur of voices and the General's voice called, "Enter!"

Hemmings strode in the room, crashed to attention - and saw his two escaped prisoners, comfortably ensconced in the General's guest chairs.

"It's them!" he screamed and reached for his gun. He discovered this was a singularly bad move: the polished leather holster at his belt was empty.

Somehow he'd lost his automatic during the prisoners" escape, and in his rush to recapture them he'd neglected to provide himself with another.

"Looking for this?" asked the girl. To Hemmings" horror she drew his Luger from her pocket and covered him with it.

Hemmings crouched, ready to spring. Without taking his eyes from Ace he said, "General, you are in great danger. These people are resistance terrorists, no doubt planning your assassination. When I attack the female, I beg you to throw yourself to the floor and summon assistance."

The man's laugh spoiled the dramatic scene. "All right, we'd better give the Lieutenant his gun back." He took the gun from the girl and tossed it to Hemmings, who caught it neatly - and immediately trained it on the escaped prisoner.

Ignoring him, the man turned to the General. "Permit me to explain. Part of my mission is to check up on the degree of alertness maintained by the Freikorps, on the speed of their response in matters of security. To this end, my assistant and I entered Occupied Britain unofficially - and without detection. That is why we have no luggage, and are rather strangely dressed, incidentally. On arrival in London, we wandered about the Festival, talking loudly in a treasonous and disrespectful fashion of the Fuehrer and the Reich." He gave Hemmings a sternly reproachful look.

"Only after some considerable time were we apprehended, and then only because of a chance report by a native informer."

The General looked sternly at Hemmings. "Is this true, Lieutenant?"

"It was an informer who summoned us," admitted Hemmings. "As for the rest. . ."

The stranger cut across him. "After we finally succeeded in getting ourselves arrested, I conducted a further test of Freikorps efficiency. We were held in conditions of ludicrously inadequate security, and subjected to a series of inept psychological tricks."

The General frowned. "But why did you not produce your credentials, reveal your true identity?"

"For the sake of the test!"

"Yes, of course, of course."

"Besides which, no one so much as asked me my name," continued the stranger. "Moreover, secrecy is the essence of my work. My true name, my official identity, my very presence here in Occupied Britain, must be revealed to as few people as possible - and certainly not to low-grade Freikorps interrogators. So, in order to avoid the no doubt about to be forthcoming questioning, I removed myself and my assistant from the scene."

Hemmings saw the General's face go red. They've done it now, thought Hemmings exultantly. They've finally gone too far. Any minute now the old man will tell me to take them out and shoot them.

"So," said the General chokingly. "You were the escaped prisoners - and you reported yourselves to me!"

"Precisely, General."

To his astonishment, Hemmings saw that the General was actually laughing.

"Herr Doktor, you're a character, you really are!", he spluttered. He looked at the baffled Hemmings and laughed again. "My poor Lieutenant, if you could see your face!"

"The situation may have its humorous aspect," said the stranger drily.

"However, the need for secrecy is real and absolute. You remember our earlier discussions, General, the question of my report. . . "

The General sobered at once. "Indeed yes."

"If I may make a suggestion?"

"Please do, Herr Doktor."

"It has already been necessary to reveal something of my identity and my mission to this young officer. May I suggest that he be attached to my staff?

I shall need an aide, and this would remove the need for informing others."

"An excellent idea, Herr Doktor. Lieutenant Hemmings!"

Hemmings crashed to attention. "My General?"

"This gentleman, who will be known to you only as the Herr Doktor, is a high official of the Reich on a vital and top secret mission. You will be attached to him as his personal aide and you will see that he has anything he needs. Do you understand?"

"At your orders, Herr General."

"I may add," said the General, "that if it were not for the Herr Doktor's request for your services, you might now be facing an SS court martial for incompetence and loss of military property."

Hemmings looked at the automatic in his hand and hastily put it away. "I am most grateful for your forbearance, Herr General, and deeply sensible of the honour of the post with which you entrust me."

The General turned back to the Doctor. "What are your immediate needs, Herr Doktor?"

The Doctor waved a careless hand. "Suitable accommodation for myself and my assistant, food, clothing . . . We can discuss research facilities later."

"See to it, Lieutenant," barked the General. "One of the river suites should be acceptable."

"They are all occupied, General."

"Then evict someone."

"At your orders, my General."

Seething with suppressed rage, Hemmings saw the General turn ingratiatingly to the Doctor. "May I hope for your company at dinner, Herr Doktor?"

"I fear not. I shall begin work at once, and the less we are seen together the better. A little something in my room, perhaps, my needs are simple. . .

"

"Arrange it at once, Lieutenant," ordered the General. "And the other matters as well. The Herr Doktor is to have everything he wants, do you understand?"

"At your orders, my General." Hemmings saluted and marched away to begin his new career as the Doctor's dogsbody.

As he strode down the corridor, his mind was in a ferment of speculation.

How had the Doctor managed to win over Strasser so completely? Could he really be a high official of the Reich? Hemmings shook his head. The Doctor was somebody all right, a highly intelligent and formidable personality to be sure. But a top-ranking Nazi? Never! He was a fake - and given time, Hemmings knew he could prove it. Perhaps things hadn't turned out so badly after all.

After politely evicting an astonished and indignant SS Colonel from his suite, Hemmings made his way to the kitchens and ordered the finest cold collation the hotel could provide. And, he thought, I only hope the little bastard chokes.

"More champagne, Ace? Or would you care for a little more caviar?"

Ace gave him a brooding look. "I suppose a Coke and a hamburger is out of the question?"

They were sitting at a table by the window in their riverside suite. Beside the table was a trolley laden with delicacies of every kind. Smoked salmon, caviar, roast chicken, roast beef, roast pork, a variety of salads, three kinds of wine not including the champagne. Not to mention a selection of mega-fattening puddings and a jug of cream. All this had been produced by the Doctor's request for "a simple cold snack". It had been impossible to turn it down, and it had been quite a job getting rid of the waiter.

The Doctor spread a little more caviar on his toast. "I'm afraid it wouldn't fit the dignity of the Reich," he said, in answer to her question. "Make the most of it, Ace."

"Now look here," began Ace.

The Doctor shook his head. He put a finger to his lips, then to his ear, then pointed upwards.

Ace frowned. "I don't..."

"Just eat, Ace. Talk later."

Ace was hungrier than she realized, and she tucked in to cold meat and salad, followed by trifle and cream and washed down by champagne. The Doctor pecked and sipped at this and that in his usual birdlike fashion and so they ate together in silence, finishing the

meal with coffee from a silver vacuum jug.

When the meal was over, the Doctor rose and headed for the bathroom, beckoning the puzzled Ace to follow. In the luxurious bathroom the Doctor put the plug in the enormous bath and turned on hot and cold taps together. The room filled with steam, and the sound of running water.

The Doctor perched on the wide rim of the bath, and beckoned Ace to sit beside him. "All right, fire away!"

Ace had seen enough spy movies to realize what was going on. "You think our suite's bugged."

"I'm sure of it."

"I thought we were supposed to be honoured guests?"

"We are. Doesn't mean they trust us."

"But Professor -"

"Look, Ace, these people live in a world of treachery and betrayal, a constant jockeying for position and power. That's why they scare so easily.

They don't trust their dearest friends or their oldest colleagues. They don't even trust themselves. . . "

In a nearby store cupboard, Hemmings stood over an earphone-wearing technician. The man took off his headphones and looked up. "Nothing, Lieutenant. Just running water. There's conversation underneath, but I can't make anything out. They appear to be in the bathroom."

"Both of them?"

"Apparently, sir," said the technician woodenly. It wasn't for the likes of him to speculate on the personal habits of important Reich officials.

"I offered to stay and wait on them, sir," said the waiter. "They wouldn't have it, threw me out."

Hemmings nodded. "Here, let me try..." Pushing the technician aside he put on the earphones.

"We came here after the Timewyrm, right?" said Ace. "So what do you

think you're doing, playing top Nazi?"

"Oh, do think, Ace," said the Doctor. "You've got a brain, why not use it?

We follow the time-path indicator here - and run straight into evidence of time tampering. Obviously it needs investigating."

"I suppose so."

"Now this is a society of top dogs and underdogs - and if I'm to investigate I have to be a top dog at least for a time."

Ace changed tack. "Are you sure the Timewyrm's responsible for whatever's happened?"

"Well, no," admitted the Doctor. "We may have stumbled on to a completely different time-crime - like a policeman chasing one burglar who trips over another."

"But you think it's the Timewyrm?"

"To be honest, I'm not sure."

"Why not?"

"I told you already - it just doesn't seem like her style."

"What style? Evil, destructive and raving bonkers?"

"Precisely. In her present state the Timewyrm's a positive hurricane of evil.

She'll storm through the universe, leaving a trail of destruction behind her."

"So?"

"Well, this business is too fiddly for her, too well planned. To interfere with history just enough to change the result of World War Two would call for some very delicate adjustments. A hurricane doesn't sit down and fiddle with things. It just smashes them up."

"So why don't we go back to the TARDIS and start again?"

"Because even if we have stumbled on a completely different crime, it still has to be investigated."

"Never mind investigating, Professor - why don't we do something about it?"

"Such as?"

Ace considered. "Well, you said that old bloke we met was probably in the resistance, right?"

"Go on."

"Well, let's get in contact with him, and give the resistance a hand. I've been doing a bit of work on intro-nine, actually, and you could rig up a few rayguns..."

Hemmings jumped, pushing back the earphones.

"Something wrong, sir?" asked the technician.

"He's yelling," said Hemmings.

"Yelling what?"

" "No!" or to be precise, "No! No! No! No! No!" "

He replaced the earphones, but now he could hear only the sounds of rushing water.

The Doctor had remembered the microphones and was whispering furiously into Ace's ear. "You've seen the state of things here, haven't you?

Torture, brutality, oppression, starvation, all going on years after it ought to have been put a stop to?"

Ace nodded dumbly.

"And do you know what caused it?" hissed the Doctor.

"Interference with time?"

"Precisely! And you want to cure it with even more massive interference, disaster piled on disaster!"

"And you've got a better idea?"

"Naturally! I propose to trace the interference to its source, and then correct it."

"Suppose it all started years ago?"

"Then we go back in the TARDIS and nip it in the bud."

"We happen to have lost the TARDIS, remember?"

"Come on, Ace, use your head. Who took the TARDIS?"

"According to that old codger it was the British Free Corps."

"And where would they take it?"

"To their HQ, I suppose. . . " Ace looked at him. "Here?"

"Right here. It's in the cellars under guard, not far from where we were locked

up."

Ace was too tired to argue. "All right, Professor, you win. What do you want me to do?"

In a low confidential voice the Doctor told her.

"I can handle that," said Ace when he'd finished. "What now?"

The Doctor peered into the huge bath which was nearly full. "Well, your bath's ready, so you might as well use it. Then I suggest you get some sleep. There are night things in the bedroom."

"What about you?"

"Sleep is for tortoises," said the Doctor.

"Come on now, Professor."

"My dear Ace, our sitting room is full of huge armchairs and overstuffed sofas. I shall be perfectly comfortable, I assure you. I've got a lot of thinking to do."

Ace yawned. "Okay, if you're sure . . . Oh yeah, something else. Why did you ask for that smoothie Hemmings to be your aide? You made such a fool of him, he must hate your guts."

The Doctor chuckled. "You're probably right."

"Then why - "

"Because I like to have my enemies where I can see them. Which reminds me..." The Doctor leaned forward and turned off the bath-taps.

In the store room, Hemmings was concentrating furiously, but could only hear the sound of running water and the occasional garbled word. Then the noise of the water stopped, and he heard the Doctor's incisive voice in his ear. "Lieutenant Hemmings! Report to me at nine a.m. sharp, if you please.

We have a busy day

ahead."

"Jawohl, Herr Doktor!" muttered Hemmings savagely.

Tearing off the headphones he hurled them across the room.

6: INVESTIGATIONS

Ace was being chased down endless metal corridors by a huge black swastika-wearing Dalek. Its sucker arm was thrust stiffly upwards and it was chanting "Heil Doktor! Heil Doktor!" in a harsh metallic voice. She wanted to stop and protest that this was all wrong, but she knew that the Dalek would kill her before she could explain properly. Another Dalek appeared, carrying a breakfast-tray. Ace could smell coffee and bacon...

But could she trust Dalek catering?

With profound relief Ace work up - and immediately started worrying again.

She was in a silk nightdress, sleeping between fine linen sheets. She opened her eyes and saw a hotel bedroom, decorated in a style of luxury to which she'd never been accustomed. Had she drifted from one dream to another? No, the room and the bed were real enough. So was the smell of coffee and bacon. So was the brisk rap on the door and the Doctor's voice.

"Come on, Ace, rise and shine. Most of the toast's gone already. . . "

After a hasty wash Ace scrambled into her clothes and emerged to find

the Doctor, spick and span and apparently rested, finishing off his share of a hearty breakfast.

Despite his threat there was plenty of toast left. Plenty of everything really, coffee, bacon, eggs, and some rice and fish stuff the Doctor called kedgeree.

Ace piled her plate high and tucked in. "Do you well here, don't they?"

"It's the Freikorps HQ," said the Doctor. "The loyal supporters of the Reich deserve the best."

Ace looked out at the view of London, grey buildings beyond a grey river.

"What about them out there? The ordinary people."

"I'm sure they're provided with a nourishing diet adequate to their needs,"

said the Doctor straight faced.

Ace remembered the thin tea and sawdust buns at the coffee stall. She opened her mouth to argue, but the Doctor pointed upwards and put a finger to his ears and then to his lips.

"Yes, I'm sure they are," she said, and went on munching, though with less enjoyment than before.

"We need to keep our strength up, Ace," said the Doctor gently. "We've got an important job to do."

"I'm looking forward to it," said Ace. Let the unseen listeners make what they liked out of that!

Overnight an assortment of garments had appeared, laid out on chairs in the little hallway of the suite. The Doctor wandered over to them and started trying things on. As Ace finished her third cup of coffee he called,

"Ace? What do you think?"

She turned. The Doctor was wearing a long black leather overcoat and a black soft hat.

"Well, how do I look?"

Ace studied him for a moment. "Ghastly!"

"Really?" said the Doctor, pleased. "You're not just saying that? Needs a final touch, I think. . ." Fishing in his bottomless pockets he produced a monocle on a black ribbon and screwed it into his left eye. "There, how about that?"

"Terrific," said Ace. "Real Gestapo chic!"

At nine o'clock exactly there was a knock on the door.

"Kommen Sie!" barked the Doctor.

The door opened and Lieutenant Hemmings marched in and snapped to attention, giving the Nazi salute. "Heil Hitler!"

The Doctor touched a casual hand to the brim of his soft black hat. "Well done, Lieutenant. You have transport available?"

"There is a car and driver outside, Herr Doktor. They are at your service -as I am myself."

Hemmings was immaculate in neatly pressed black uniform, badges and buttons gleaming, jackboots polished till you could see your face in them.

No doubt about it, thought Ace: he was tall, dark, amazingly handsome, and he gave her the creeps.

The Doctor was nodding approvingly. "Sehr gut! Your military records section, your archives, where are they situated?"

"At the Reichsmuseum, in Bloomsbury, Herr Doktor. Formerly the British Museum."

"We shall go there at once."

"It will not yet be open, Herr Doktor."

"Then you will make arrangements to open it," said the Doctor.

"At once, Herr Doktor! With your permission?" Hemmings hurried over to the telephone and rapped out a series of orders. He slammed down the phone. "The caretaker lives nearby, and a messenger is on the way to his house. He will be waiting at the Museum by the time you arrive."

"Satisfactory," said the Doctor. "There now remains the matter of my assistant."

Hemmings looked at Ace. "This young lady, Herr Doktor?"

"Just so. No doubt you have been wondering why I found it necessary to bring her with me?"

Hemmings looked at Ace in a way that made her want to hit him. "It is not for me to speculate, Herr Doktor. And with such a charming young lady. . .

The Doctor raised his eyebrows, causing his monocle to drop out. He stuck it back in again.

"My dear fellow, you surely didn't think - "

"I must confess, Herr Doktor. . ."

The Doctor laughed. "No, no, no! The girl is not unattractive but for myself I like them big, blonde and bouncy. Rubenesque! Wagnerian, even!"

"Quite so, Herr Doktor."

Terrific, thought Ace bitterly. It was bad enough being taken for the Doctor's bimbo. Now I'm not even up to bimbo standard! It wasn't hard to shoot the Doctor a glance of pure hatred which was what the part needed anyway.

"No, the young lady is here for quite another purpose," the Doctor went on.

"Her father was a leading light in the British resistance, in the early days.

He is now undergoing re-education in Sachshausen Concentration Camp.

The girl's mother was killed at the beginning of the war and, as a child, she travelled extensively with her father. She has excellent knowledge of his contacts and associates. She can be invaluable to us in rooting out the last remnants of these criminals."

Ace realized that Hemmings was looking at her in an entirely new way –

rather like a tiger surveying a nice plump deer. She was his potential victim now, his meat, and her skin crawled as his eyes moved over her. She started having doubts about the Doctor's plan. He was about to put her in Lieutenant Hemmings" power. With instructions not to harm her, of course.

But could the tiger be trusted, once it was alone with the deer? "I see," said Hemmings slowly. "Most interesting. She is willing to cooperate?" The Doctor smiled coldly. "Her father is an old man and the reeducation course is rigorous. She is well aware that his survival, let alone his eventual release, depends on her cooperation."

"A classic technique, Herr Doktor. Allow me to congratulate you."

The Doctor shrugged modestly. "I think the best plan is for me to go directly to the Reichsmuseum alone, while I leave you here to deal with her."

Hemmings looked puzzled. "I'm sorry, Herr Doktor, I'm not clear what you want me to do."

"Do?" said the Doctor in mock surprise. "My dear Lieutenant, she is a traitor suspected of links to the resistance. I want you to arrest and interrogate her!"

When the messenger from his local Freikorps HQ pounded on his door, the caretaker prepared for the end. He had committed only the smallest of sins against the Reich - aid to an escaping Jewish artist, selling a few bits of ancient jewellery - but even minor crimes meant deportation or death. Old and frail as he was the caretaker didn't want to die. It wasn't so much death he feared as leaving what was left of his beloved museum. In the days when the Reichsmuseum had been called the British Museum he had been a professor and a senior curator. Now the museum was closed he was a humble caretaker but he was there, there every day. Now it was all over.

He dressed hurriedly, not wanting to be dragged away in his nightshirt, and stumbled downstairs, a tall thin old man with wispy white hair. He opened the door and found himself facing the usual Freikorps thug. This one was mounted on a huge motorcycle which. he'd ridden right up to the front door.

"I am ready," said the caretaker with as much dignity as he could muster.

He wished his knees would stop trembling.

The Freikorps messenger stared at him. "You don't even know what I've come for yet, you old fool."

"But surely. . ." The caretaker made himself shut up. "I'm ready for whatever you want me to do."

"You'd better be. Some bigwig from Freikorps HQ wants to consult the military archives. You're to meet him at the museum right away and open-up for him. Heaven help you if you keep him waiting." The messenger roared away.

Breathing a silent prayer of thanks, the caretaker fetched his keys and wheeled his ancient bicycle out of the hallway. As he pedalled frantically through the deserted streets of ruined Bloomsbury, the caretaker told himself he still wasn't out of trouble. If the visitor got there before him...

High officials of the Reich weren't accustomed to be kept waiting and a complaint from an irate VIP would be enough to finish him.

As he turned into Museum Road he saw a black limousine parked outside the museum. Frantically he pedalled up to it and dismounted, panting, leaning his bicycle against a pillar.

Immediately the limousine's chauffeur, another Freikorps thug, jumped from the car and started screaming at him. "You are late, you stupid old swine. It will be reported. The Herr Doktor has been kept waiting. Is this the respect you show a high official of the Reich?" He raised his fist and the caretaker flinched, awaiting the inevitable blow.

"One moment!" said a voice behind them. A small, dark man in a leather coat and soft black hat was getting out of the car.

He transfixed the chauffeur with a stare from his cold grey eyes. "You!" The thug came to attention.

"Herr Doktor?"

"Did I request you to speak?"

"No, Herr Doktor, but - "

"Then do not speak. Get back in the car and wait until I return."

"Very good, Herr Doktor. May I ask how long -"

"You may not. But if you are not here, waiting at attention when I

return, it is I who will make the report."

"Very good, Herr Doktor." The chauffeur jumped back into the car and sat to attention behind the wheel, staring straight ahead. The man called the Doctor came over and touched the trembling caretaker on the arm. "There is no problem," he said gently. "We arrived virtually together, and there will be no complaint. Shall we go inside?"

Producing a huge bunch of keys, the old man opened the doors. His hands were trembling so much he had difficulty in getting the key in the lock. "You are very kind, Herr Doktor. I should not like to lose my privilege of working at the Museum, even though it is closed. . . " He wheeled his bicycle inside the foyer and closed and locked the door.

"If you will follow me, Doctor? The military archives are in the rear of the building, we must go through the galleries. . ." He led the Doctor up the stairs and through the first gallery. The caretaker saw that the visitor was staring around him in evident amazement. The enormous gallery, and all the subsequent galleries, were almost empty. Where there had once been paintings, statues, tapestries there was nothing. Bare walls, empty pedestals, and a huge echoing silence in which their footsteps rang hollowly.

"I understand why the Museum is no longer open to the public," said the visitor dryly.

"I'm afraid there would be little for them to see. The bulk of the exhibits are now in Berlin. Marshal Goering himself supervised their removal."

The visitor nodded. "Yes, he was always a keen collector. . ." The caretaker wondered at his evident surprise. Naturally the museum had been looted.

The National Gallery and all the other museums and art galleries had been emptied as well, their art treasures taken for the Adolf Hitler Museum in New Berlin.

He led his visitor to a section of dusty offices behind the scenes. "When the Museum records were taken to Berlin, the Military Archives Bureau took over this area for a while. The Bureau is closed now, but the records are still waiting to be transferred... If I might ask which period. . ?"

"From the beginning of the war - until now."

"This room here, then, I think. . ." He took the visitor to a long, dusty room lined with filing cabinets. "The records are in order, beginning with this cabinet here. If there is anything else I can do?"

"Thank you, no. You have been very kind."

The caretaker shuffled away. A strange little man, he thought. And certainly the politest Nazi I've ever met. Almost too good to be true...

Left alone, the Doctor went to a filing cabinet, took out a file and opened it.

It was full of maps and military reports. He began to read.

The first part of the story followed the familiar course. It began in 1939.

After a long series of largely unopposed smash-and-grab raids on the Rhineland, Austria and Czechoslovakia - referred to by the Nazi historian as "the Fuehrer's inspired and glorious consolidation of the legitimate claims of the Reich" - Adolf Hitler had invaded Poland, a country whose safety Britain had rather rashly guaranteed.

To the historian's evident regret, the British had finally dug in their heels, honoured their obligation and ordered Hitler to leave. He was to withdraw his troops or they would declare war. Hitler was quite sure the British would never go to war over Poland - but he was wrong. In September 1939 the war began. With astonishing speed Hitler's armies swept across Europe in the Blitzkrieg, the lightning war, and the British and French were driven back. So far, so familiar, thought the Doctor. History as he knew it, as it ought to be. But somewhere along the line things had changed. The question was where, and how - and why?

He opened another file.

Hemmings and Ace were in an interrogation room. It was another concrete-walled cellar with a table in the centre and a high-powered light bulb dangling from the ceiling. The table was bolted to the floor and there were curious dark-stained grooves in it. There was a hook in the ceiling and a bathtub and sink in one corner.

They were sitting either side of the table on hard wooden chairs. Hemmings was smoking a cigarette and toying with a riding crop.

Talk about corny, thought Ace. The sinister room and the black-

uniformed man with the whip - she'd seen it in a hundred old movies. But she was uneasy all the same. What was it the Doctor had once said? "Never despise clich,s, Ace. The only reason they became clich,s is because they really work."

Suddenly Ace realized that she was afraid. Take the initiative, she thought.

Chuck your weight about, like the Doctor...

"How much longer must I wait?" she said aloud.

Hemmings slammed the whip down on the table. "I shall decide that!"

"You heard the Herr Doktor's orders," said Ace defiantly. "I was to be arrested, held for a while as if being interrogated, and then released with other prisoners so that I could make contact with the resistance. . . "

Hemmings smiled. " "As if" being interrogated," he said gently. "But how much of an "as if", that's the question." He spoke in a soft, dreamy whisper, as if in a trance. "Maybe I should give you the full treatment. I could start by having you flogged. Oh, it would all be according to the book. A set number of strokes and a doctor present in case of - accidents. There are even official forms to fill in."

He nodded towards the bath in the corner. "The water treatment is usually very successful. Head held under until the lungs are bursting, pulled out –

and shoved under again. . ."

He pointed to the hook in the ceiling. "Or there's the merry-go-round.

Hands tied behind you, hung up by the wrists and spun gently to and fro.

The effects of that can be a bit permanent, I'm afraid. Some people never quite straighten out." He drew hard on his cigarette, and regarded the glowing tip. "Even the simple cigarette, properly applied. . . "

He's a nutter, thought Ace, a genuine sicko - and I'm completely in his power.

With a mighty effort she stopped her voice from trembling. "Listen to

me, you sadistic creep. This is all a pretence. I am not, repeat not, a real prisoner. You heard the Herr Doktor's orders. If you disobey them, or exceed them in an way, you will be very, very sorry."

Hemmings drew a deep shuddering breath. "Yes. Yes, of course. Such a pity. Another time, perhaps."

"That's more like it," said Ace. "I can see you're in love with your work, but don't get carried away."

He leaned forward across the table, eyes glittering. "But I don't think we can have you coming out of an interrogation completely unmarked. It really wouldn't be at all convincing, you know."

Hemmings smashed the back of his hand across Ace's face, knocking her out of her chair.

7: RESISTANCE

In an office on the top floor of the Chancellery in New Berlin, Albert Speer, Master Architect of the Thousand Year Reich, was studying a set of plans.

A vast picture window looked out over the re-modelled city with its immensely wide boulevards and its colossal triumphal arches, its giant stadia, meeting-halls and stations. Most of the old Berlin had gone by now and the new city was more colossal, more imposing than Rome or Athens in their prime. It was a city of ten million inhabitants, ruling over a German Empire of one hundred and forty million citizens and innumerable slaves.

Speer had just returned from an interview with the Fuehrer himself. He had been displaying the plans for the new Fuehrer Palace, destined to be the crowning achievement of the New Berlin. It would be one hundred and fifty times greater than the old Bismark Chancellery. Two million square metres of floor surface, eight huge reception halls, a theatre, a dining hall with seating for thousands. But it still wasn't finished and the Fuehrer wasn't pleased. Speer sighed. They'd rebuilt most of Berlin in the last five years and even the resources of the German empire, backed by endless supplies of slave labour couldn't do the impossible.

Martin Bormann came into the room. Hitler's private secretary was one of the most powerful men in the Reich - and one of the very few who could still deal with the Fuehrer.

He looked enquiringly at Speer. "The interview - how did it go?"

The architect shrugged. "The usual impatience. Even Rome wasn't built in a day, but try telling the Fuehrer. He became angry."

"It is as I feared. There was another outburst?"

"I'm afraid so. The doctors had to be summoned and I left."

"It's getting worse," said Bormann slowly. "The constant driving forward, the sudden rages. Winning the war gave him no peace, he seems more driven than ever. Sometimes I think he'll burn himself out."

Speer made no reply. He could still hear the Fuehrer's voice, ranting and screaming, and he was still haunted by something he'd seen in, or was it behind, the Fuehrer's bright blue eyes.

Something trapped, frustrated, raging - something not quite human.

Hemmings" blow caught Ace between her upper lip and her nose. It was agonizingly painful, and her nose produced an immediate fountain of blood.

She toppled from the chair, rolled over on her shoulder and sprang to her feet, hurling herself at Hemmings, crooked hands reaching for his face.

Hemmings fell back astonished before the force of her attack, throwing up his arms to protect himself. Recovering himself, he grabbed her by the upper arms, steely fingers digging painfully in to the soft flesh, and shook her hard. Her head jolted to and fro and her still-bleeding nose sprayed drops of blood on his uniform. With a snarl of disgust, he hurled her into a corner of the room. She bounced off the wall and slid to the floor.

Breathing hard, Hemmings stared down at her. Her nose and lips were swollen and her face and much of her tee shirt were covered in blood.

"Yes, that looks much more convincing," he said and pressed a bell-push by the door. Almost at once the door opened and two Freikorps thugs appeared.

"Cleared after preliminary interrogation," said Hemmings. "Put her with the others for release."

The two men showed no trace of surprise, or even of interest in Ace's condition. They just grabbed her by the arms and hauled her to her feet.

Just as if they'd come for the rubbish, thought Ace as they dragged her out, and considering the way I feel. . .

They bustled her along the gloomy corridor and into a featureless waiting room where a handful of people sat huddled on hard wooden benches against the walls. There was a dazed-looking white-haired old man, two skinny depressed-looking girls, an immensely fat old woman wrapped in shapeless rags and a burly bald-headed workman with a bruised face and a black eye. They looked up without much interest at the sight of Ace, and she slumped down on a bench next to the fat woman, who gave her a friendly grin.

"Give you a hard time, did they, love?"

"Oh, it's nothing much," said Ace, sniffing the last few drops of blood up her nose. To her surprise, she realized she was speaking the truth.

Her nose and her upper lip were still sore but it was wearing off. She must look a right mess with all the blood, but she wasn't really hurt, not badly. She fished out a grubby handkerchief, spat on it, and tried to scrub her face clean. After all, she thought, a belt round the chops and a nosebleed... I used to get worse in the playground many a time.

She settled down to wait.

The Doctor was surrounded by scattered files. He had studied the beginnings of World War II, Britain's unexpected declaration of war, the lightning Blitzkrieg, the collapse of French resistance. He had followed events up to what should have been the familiar miracle of Dunkirk, the escape of the battered remnants of the British Army, ferried out to the waiting destroyers in the famous fleet of little ships.

The miracle hadn't happened.

In the buff-coloured military files before him, the Doctor found a different story. He read of the Nazi tanks rolling on to capture the port of Dunkirk, of the futile last stand and eventual inevitable surrender of the remains of the British Army. He read of the glorious triumph of Goering's Luftwaffe in the Battle of Britain, and the destruction and defeat of the Royal Air Force.

Particular praise was given to the Fuehrer's humane and strategic decision to concentrate the bombing on airfields and radar installations rather than on London itself.

He read finally, and with mounting astonishment, of the success of Operation Sealion, Hitler's plan for the invasion and conquest of Great Britain, of the freak storms that had sunk most of the British Navy, and the equally freak spell of fine weather as Hitler's troops crossed the Channel.

The landings had been virtually unopposed, and soon the Panzer columns were smashing their way towards London.

The Doctor sat back in his chair, staring into space - and into time. Like a chess player, battling some invisible opponent by remote control, he tried to get a sense of his enemy's thought patterns.

Dunkirk was the splitting-point. But surely Dunkirk, and the invasion that followed, were simply the culmination of a long-term plan, a slow-burning fuse hidden deep in Nazi history. He thought of the unlikely rise of Hitler from his obscure beginnings. The seeds of the evil were planted there.

Suddenly the Doctor felt a response to the probing tendrils of his thoughts.

It was as if whatever he was trying to sense was sensing him. And there was a shock of recognition, of familiarity.

"You!" thundered the voice inside his head. "Welcome, Doctor. I hoped we should meet again."

A seething whirlpool of violent emotions swept through the Doctor's mind, emotions he struggled desperately to control, to analyse. Above all there was frenzied, insane rage, but there was also fear, and a sense of powerlessness. Was there an undercurrent of yearning, of pleading?

As if incensed by the Doctor's thoughts, the storm of psychic energy swept through the records room, hurling papers, chairs, tables and finally the Doctor himself into the air.

The storm subsided as suddenly as it had come, dropping the Doctor with a thump, his head banging against a metal filing cabinet. As he lay, half-dazed, in the wrecked room, the Doctor heard metallic, inhuman laughter.

The laughter of Ishtar. He could smell brimstone... I was wrong, he thought dazedly.

Quite wrong. It's the Timewyrm after all. . .

Ace and her fellow prisoners were jolting through the streets in a Freikorps lorry. There was a guard in the truck, a pimply, crop-haired youth in the ill-fitting black-and-tan Freikorps uniform. He was clutching a .303 rifle, its bayonet fixed.

Ace turned to the workman sitting next to her. "What's going on? I thought they were letting us go?"

"They are, luv. Leastways, I 'ope so."

"So why didn't they just let us out?"

He gave her a look of mock horror. "In a posh place like that, outside the Savoy 'Otel? They don't want the likes of us mucking the place up, specially if we've been knocked about a bit. 'Uman litter, that's what we are.

So they takes us and dumps us where nobody minds."

"Silence! No talking in the truck!" said the guard in a high, nervous voice.

The prisoners looked at him. "Belt up, sonny," said the workman.

"What did you do?" asked Ace.

"They say I "ad one too many and fell out with some Freikorps lads. Don't remember much about it to be honest. Terrible thing, drink. . . "

The truck jolted to a halt and the guard jumped down.

"Ere we are," said the workman. "All git aht!" He jumped down from the truck. "Well, I'm off for an 'air of the dog wot bit me - if I can find a pub with some beer left." He wandered away.

The rest of the prisoners, Ace included, got down from the truck. Ace looked round. They were in an area of nondescript little streets, under the shadow of a railway viaduct. She turned and saw the fat woman struggling to get down from the truck, watched impatiently by the guard.

"Get a move on, we ain't got all day," he said impatiently, and gave her a shove that nearly unbalanced her. Ace barged him out of the way and helped the fat woman down.

"Thanks ducky," she wheezed as she eased her bulk out of the truck.

"Here, you!" said a hoarse angry voice. The guard grabbed Ace by the shoulder and spun her round. "Didn't you learn your lesson the first time?

Maybe you need to go back for another dose."

The fat woman bore down on him like a tank. "I wouldn't hang about, sonny, not if I was you. The Freikorps ain't too popular round here. They been known to disappear."

"Yeah?" said the guard. "You know what'll happen to this place if anyone touches us?"

"I know, all right," said the fat woman calmly. "Shoot a few hostages, blow up a building or two. We've seen it all before. Only - it wouldn't do you much good, though. I mean, you wouldn't be here to see any of it."

The hatred in the fat woman's voice chilled Ace's blood. It seemed to chill the guard's blood too. He jumped into the truck, banged on the roof of the cab and the truck rattled away.

"Freikorps pipsqueaks!" said the fat woman scornfully.

Ace remembered her mission. "I'm looking for a place called Ma Barker's Caff..."

The fat woman looked at her suspiciously. "Where'd you hear about that?"

"It was recommended to me - well, to me and a friend of mine. An old man at the Festival said they did a really good cuppa."

"Old man? What old man, what was 'is name?"

"I don't know. He was white-haired and very tall. He said to say Pop sent us."

The fat woman beamed. "Ah well then, that's all right. You come with me love, and I'll show you. It's not far from here, and it's on me way . . ."

Alarmed by a noise like a rushing wind, the old caretaker hurried to the archive room. To his horror he found the room in a shambles, and his visitor unconscious on the floor. For a moment the old caretaker paused, frozen in horror. If harm came to a top-ranking Nazi in the museum...

He knelt beside the body. "Herr Doktor! Herr Doktor!"

To the caretaker's vast relief the Doctor opened his eyes.

"Are you all right?" asked the old man anxiously.

Rubbing the back of his head, the visitor sat up. "Fine, fine, never better!"

He sprang to his feet, reeled and staggered against the filing cabinet, clutching it for support.

"I heard a noise, a strange rushing sound, I came to see what was happening and found this." The caretaker looked round the wrecked room.

"What happened here?"

"Something very strange indeed."

"Were you attacked?"

"I suppose I was, in a way."

All the caretaker's fears returned. "I assure you, all doors were properly secured," he babbled. "No unauthorized person could have got in."

"I think it's more a matter of an unauthorized ghost," said the strange visitor and smiled reassuringly. "Whatever happened, it certainly wasn't your fault.

You've been most helpful, as I shall inform my superiors. Now, let's get this place sorted out. . . "

"Please, allow me, Herr Doktor."

"No, no, I insist. It's all my fault, in a way."

To the caretaker's astonishment, his visitor insisted on helping with the clearing up. He picked up the overthrown chairs and tables and put them back into place, while the caretaker returned the papers to their folders and the folders to the filing cabinets.

When the job was done the visitor said goodbye, shaking hands in a way the caretaker had almost forgotten. "I'm sorry things have been so hard for you," he said. "We must hope for better times."

The Doctor marched round to the Museum forecourt, where he found his driver still sitting rigidly to attention behind the wheel. He leaped out to open the limousine door for the Doctor.

"Freikorps HQ," snapped the Doctor.

The driver jumped back behind the wheel and the car pulled away.

"May I ask if the Herr Doktor had a successful morning?"

"You may not," said the Doctor coldly. "Not unless you wish to find yourself explaining to the Gestapo the reasons for your curiosity about matters which do not concern you."

It was an effective conversation stopper. The driver was silent for the rest of the trip, which suited the Doctor very well. He was brooding over what had happened to him, over the strange mixture of emotions

that he'd felt so clearly. Mad, bad, and trapped, he thought. I wonder... He was troubled by the ease with which that alien mind had entered his own.

The trouble is we're linked, the Timewyrm and I. Maybe she senses where I am... She might even know what I'm thinking . . .

Leaning back in his seat, the Doctor began summoning up certain mind protection techniques he'd learned as a young man on Gallifrey from a hermit who lived on top of a mountain. He remembered the frozen puddles on the icy path to the summit, and a daisy that had seemed to hold the secret of existence. The knowledge was long disused but it was still in place.

He closed his eyes and emptied his mind.

As they pulled up outside Freikorps HQ, the Doctor smiled, opened his eyes and sat up, filled with new energy and purpose. Future unauthorized guests, or ghosts, would find the doors of his mind bolted, shutters down, and alarm systems switched on.

He sprang out of the car and marched into the swastika-draped hotel foyer.

Once again he saw General Strasser coming down the stairs, surrounded by his retinue.

At the sight of the Doctor he hurried over. "Ah, Herr Doktor! I am just off on my postponed tour of the Festival. Unless of course there is any reason. .. "

The Doctor shook his head. "By all means continue."

The General lowered his voice. "Your investigation progresses?"

"I am on the trail," said the Doctor mysteriously. "Can you tell me where I might find Lieutenant Hemmings? I am hoping he will have news of my assistant."

The General looked round for help and immediately an aide, one of the surrounding colonels, stepped forward.

"The Lieutenant spent the first part of the morning interrogating some suspects."

"Is he still here?" said the Doctor impatiently.

"You have just missed him, Herr Doktor. Just a short time ago, he took a squad to raid a suspected centre of resistance activities." With some distaste the Colonel added, "A place known, I understand, as Ma Barker's Caff."

8: TRAPPED

"Here we are, love," said the fat woman.

She had led Ace through a maze of twisting back streets, and now they had stopped outside a shabby little cafe. It had been formed by putting a big front window and a door over the front of a disused railway arch.

The whole place reeked of seediness and decay. The once bright green paint was shabby and peeling, and the lace curtains over the steamed-up windows were grimy and tattered. Above the door was a notice board, ornate letters in cracked gold paint: THE COSY CAFE: PROP H. BARKER.

The fat woman saw Ace looking at the sign.

"That aitch was my 'Arry," she said. "Captured with the rest at Dunkirk, never saw him again. I keep the place going, just in case. Come on inside."

She led the way into a murky curved-ceilinged room, like a sectioned-off bit of tunnel. Rickety wooden chairs and tables filled the main body of the room, and there was a counter across the far end. The place felt warm and cosy, and curiously safe.

Behind the counter was a steaming tea urn and a tall white-haired old man.

He was polishing the counter with a grimy duster and he looked strangely familiar.

"Ullo, Ma," he shouted. "Let you aht, 'ave they?"

"Got caught up in one of them random Freikorps sweeps, didn't I? Just the old routine check-up nonsense. Round up the usual suspects. Dunno why they bother."

Ace came to a halt. "Hang on a minute." She turned to the fat woman.

"You're Ma Barker, and this is your cafe?"

"That's right, love."

"You own the place I was looking for - and we just happen to finish up on the same truck?"

"Life's full of little coincidences, ducky," said Ma Barker placidly.

"Yeah? Well, this little coincidence is too big for me," said Ace. "I think I'll just leave."

"Oh, I don't think you can do that, ducky," said Ma Barker. "Not till we've had a nice little chat. Can she, Pop?"

"I'm afraid it's out of the question, my dear young lady," said the old man.

His voice had altered, and he had a huge service revolver in his hand.

Ma Barker waddled to the front door, locked it, turned the hanging sign round to CLOSED and bustled Ace up to the counter. "Get the young lady a nice cuppa, Pop. One for me and you as well."

The old man poured three cups of tea into thick china mugs, and nodded to a tin sugar bowl on the counter. Close to it, chained to the counter, was a sugar-encrusted spoon.

Ace took a swig of tea. It was hot and strong and it really tasted of tea.

Ma Barker slurped her tea with noisy satisfaction. "Anythink for sandwiches?"

"Got some real butter and a nice bit of ham under the counter," said Pop.

"Fell off a Freikorps lorry."

From under the counter he produced a chunk of ham, a long thin knife, a loaf of bread and a packet of butter. He put down the revolver within easy reach – easy for him, not for Ace took a bread knife from

a drawer and began cutting the bread.

Ma Barker took the long knife and started slicing the ham.

"Now then, ducky," she said. "Who are you - and what do you want 'ere?"

Ace nodded towards the old man. "You asked me here - at the Festival.

You were painting some railings that didn't need painting."

"Well, I asked your friend, didn't I?" said Pop. "Little feller in the funny hat. What's happened to him?"

"He's busy," said Ace. "That's why he sent me instead."

"Ah, but to do what?" said Ma Barker.

Ace tried to remember the Doctor's instructions. They weren't much help.

"Just talk to them, Ace," he'd said. "You can't tell them who we are and where we've come from, they'd never believe you. You can't say what we're really after, they'd never believe that either. Just say we've come to help.

Find out all you can about what's been happening here, since the war started, and since England lost. See if you can find any suggestion of alien interference - anything that tastes of Timewyrm." He'd paused and added sternly, "And don't give them any nitro-nine."

Ace became aware that Pop and Ma Barker were looking at her expectantly. She looked at the gun close to Pop and the long knife in Ma Barker's hand, and realized that she was talking for her life.

"The Doctor and I come from somewhere far away," she said. "Don't ask me where, I can't tell you."

"America?" asked Pop. "That blue box was never made in this country."

"Canada?" suggested Ma Barker. "The government in exile?"

"Never mind," said Ace. "Believe me, you don't need to know." With a sudden inspiration she added, "And what you don't know they can't make you tell." To her relief her audience nodded agreement. "We've come here to see if we can help you," she went on. "But to do that we

need to know what things have been like here since the war."

The two of them looked at her in suspicious silence.

"Look," said Ace desperately. "I'm not asking for any secrets, all right? I don't want to know anything the Nazis don't already know, no names, no places. I just want to know all the everyday stuff about what's been going on here. All the things you know and we don't because you've been here and we haven't."

Pop and Ma Barker looked at each other.

"Don't see the harm in it," said Ma Barker.

Pop said, "May as well go along with it - for the time being."

They began to talk. They told her of the lightning invasion, the German troops in Whitehall before anyone realized what was happening.

"Soon after that they signed the Anglo-German Treaty," said Pop. "Just another name for surrender, that was."

"Then they put him back on the throne," said Ma Barker. "And her, that American bird he run off with!" She sniffed. "Queen Wallis!"

"Go on," said Ace. "What happened after that?"

Apparently there had been instant arrest for anyone reckoned even a potential danger to the Reich.

"Civil servants, ex-officers, trade unionists, lawyers, any MP's who didn't get away," said Pop. "They'd got blacklists all ready - they made a pretty clean sweep."

"And I don't "ave to tell you what happened to the Jews," said Ma Barker.

"And the Gypsies and the invalids and anyone else they thought was useless."

Next had come the mass deportations.

"The Voluntary Labour Force," said Ma Barker. "Voluntary - that's a laugh."

"Every able-bodied male between seventeen and forty-five was just

scooped up and taken away," said Pop.

Ace remembered how, apart from the occupying forces and their hangers-on, they'd seen only women and children and old people. "What happened to them?"

"Sent to the Continent - slave labour," said Pop. "They're strengthening Fortress Europe, helping to build New Berlin. Pretty well worked to death, so I hear. Anyway, no one ever comes back. "

"Women too," said Ma Barker. "Only the blue-eyed blondes though. Sent to Race Centres to have kids by those SS bastards. The idea is to educate the kids in Germany and send them back here when they've grown up into good Nazis."

"Just about everything of any value was shipped back to Germany," said Pop. "Art treasures, industrial equipment, the lot. They've left a poor and empty country full of old people, most of 'em half starved and worked to death. Soon as they've killed us off, they'll colonize the place with nice pure-blooded Aryans. The English people will have ceased to exist."

"What about you lot, then? asked Ace. "You seem to be keeping your end up."

"We do what we can, ducky," said Ma Barker. "Bit of thieving, bit of sabotage."

"Bit of knocking off Nazi officials and chucking them in the river?"

suggested Ace.

Pop cut another slice of ham with the long thin knife. "We got a tip some Nazi bigwig was coming over to tighten things up. It seemed a good idea to discourage him."

"You mean murder him."

"Not murder, war," said Pop.

"But you're a civilian."

"On the contrary," said Pop in his different voice. "I'm a Major in the British Army -at least I was, when there still was a British Army. I was one of Colonel Gubbins" Auxiliary Units, ordered to go underground after the invasion. I never surrendered. As far as I'm concerned, the

war's still on."

He passed Ace a ham sandwich.

She sat there munching, wondering if she'd learned anything the Doctor would find useful. "Did anything weird or odd or unusual happen, during the invasion?"

Pop looked puzzled. "Not that I can think of. There was a battle and we lost. Once the Army'd been captured in France we'd got practically nothing left to fight them with."

"And there was nothing else?" persisted Ace.

He frowned. "I'm not really sure what you're getting at."

"Neither am I," confessed Ace. "It's just that I was specifically told to ask about anything weird or offbeat."

"What about all that black magic stuff? suggested Ma Barker.

Pop snorted. "Lot of superstitious nonsense."

"Tell me," demanded Ace.

Ma Barker lowered her voice. "Around the time of the invasion, some people were saying Hitler couldn't lose because the devil was on his side.

He was supposed to have these black magicians working for him. They caused all them freak storms what wrecked the Navy, and fixed the fine weather for the invasion, put a jinx on our leaders, stuff like that. They were called the Black Coven."

"Lot of silly rumours," insisted Pop. "Soon died out, didn't they?"

"Only because they made sure they did."

"Who made sure?" asked Ace.

"Them Nasties. Any mention of the Black Coven was subversive talk, punishable by death. No wonder people shut up about it!" Ma Barker lowered her voice with a sort of ghoulish relish. "They're supposed to be in Germany still, 'elping old 'Itler, telling 'im how to conquer the world. They live in this great castle somewhere, and they have evil rituals and 'uman sacrifices! Only like Pop says, we're not supposed to know and we ain't allowed to talk about it!"

"So the Nazis still take the stories seriously?"

"Don't want a bunch of mumbo jumbo chaps in black robes stealing all the credit," said Pop. "Mind you, they were always a superstitious lot. Hitler's had his own astrologer for years, and apparently Himmler's right round the bend."

Someone rattled at the door.

Pop grabbed his revolver, holding it out of sight under the counter.

Ma Barker snatched up the long knife., She went to the door and peered out through the glass.

"It's all right, it's only old Arnie."

She opened the door and a furtive little figure slipped through. Ma Barker closed the door and locked it again.

"I came to warn you," said the little man. "There's a big Freikorps operation planned for this area -" he broke off, staring at Ace. "What's she doing here?"

"It's a long story," said Ma Barker.

"It'll be a bloody short one if you don't get rid of her," snapped the little man. "She's with the Freikorps. I saw her and her friend just yesterday, riding round in one of their limousines."

Ace felt the cold steel of Ma Barker's knife at her throat.

9: THE RAID

Sitting next to the driver of the Freikorps lorry, Lieutenant Hemmings checked the magazine of his Luger. He slammed the magazine back into the butt of the automatic, remembering the way the girl had humiliated him in the General's office. Hemmings smiled with sadistic pleasure. To the gang of Freikorps thugs in the lorry this was just another routine raid, but to Hemmings it was sweet revenge.

His little chess game had paid off, and he was about to make the winning move. Soon the girl would be in his hands, for good this time. Once the girl talked he would have the Doctor as well.

Hemmings noticed a spot on his lapel and dabbed it with a moistened finger. The finger came away pink. The spot was blood - Ace's blood.

He licked the end of his finger and smiled.

Pop turned to Ma Barker. "How did you come to bring her here?"

"She was on the release truck with me." Ma Barker touched Ace's swollen lip. "The bruise is genuine enough, and so's the blood."

Pop shook his head. "Proves nothing. Any good spy'd take a punch or two to be more convincing."

"The old beaten-up prisoner trick," said Ma Barker. "And I fell for it."

The little man darted to the door and peered through the glass panel.

"She's a plant all right! I'd slit her throat right now if I were you. You'll need to dispose of the body before they get here."

There was something strangely familiar about his scurrying, mouse-like movements, and suddenly Ace realized where she'd seen him before.

"Hang on a minute - I'm not the one who's working with the Freikorps. You are." Ignoring the knife, she turned indignantly to Ma Barker. "This is the man who turned us in - me and the Doctor. He overheard us talking in one of those pavilions and shopped us for the sake of the reward."

There was total conviction in Ace's voice and it was quite clear she was telling the truth. Ma Barker's knife was still at Ace's throat - but suddenly the revolver in Pop's hand was covering the mousy little man.

"Well, Arnie?" said Pop gently.

The little man looked from Ma to Pop, licking suddenly dry lips. "All right, what if I did?" he said defiantly. He turned appealingly to Pop. "Look, you know the position I'm in. I keep in with the Freikorps and the Occupation Authorities - so I can let you know what's going on. Warn you about raids, things like that - the way I did just now."

Pop didn't say anything. Neither did Ma Barker.

The little man swallowed and went on. "So, if I'm going to keep in with them I have to give them something from time to time. Bits of

useless information, reports on what you're not gonna do. It all helps to tie them up watching the wrong targets. And if somebody's a real traitor, and a danger to you - well, maybe I plant a bit of evidence and inform on 'em." He looked expectantly at his audience.

"True enough ducky," said Ma Barker. "But it all 'as to be cleared with us, dunnit? Every scrap of info you give 'em, every poor soul you turn in - we're supposed to know about it first. Now, I don't recall giving the okay on shopping this young lady and her mate. Do you, Pop?"

"No, I don't, Ma." The muzzle of the huge revolver was still trained steadily on the little man.

"So I used my initiative," said Arnie.

Pop shook his head. "Initiative can be dangerous, Arnie. Can't it, Ma?"

"Too true," said Ma. "You start shopping people freelance like, you might get a taste for it."

"You might start thinking about me and Ma," said Pop. "Thinking how much you could tell 'em about us, and how well they'd pay for it."

Arnie looked so terrified that Ace almost felt sorry for him. "Lissen," he said desperately. "I heard these two shooting their mouths off at the Festival, danger to themselves and everyone else. I knew they were strangers so I thought.

. ."

"So you thought about the nice big reward," said Ace. "Don't you realize we came here to help you?"

"Help us - you?" said Arnie. Again he turned in appeal to Ma Barker and Pop. "That funny little bloke who was with her - he wasn't scared a bit when they pulled him in. He just sort of took charge of everything. Soon after that, he's riding around in a Freikorps limo, with a Freikorps driver -and she was with him!"

Now everyone was looking at Ace.

"All right, that bit's true," said Ace. The knife moved closer to her throat.

"But I can explain," she said hastily.

"It'll need to be good, ducky," said Ma Barker.

Ace looked at Pop. "You know that bloke who had the nasty accident, by the river when we first arrived? Well, the Doctor and I reached him, after you but before the guards. Before he died he gave the Doctor a black leather folder with a gold swastika badge inside. It said he was some kind of inspector . . . only in German."

"Reichsinspektor-General," said Pop softly. "Hitler's personal investigator.

Go anywhere, see anyone, do anything, no questions asked. We caught a big one all right."

"Right," said Ace. "Well, when we got nicked the Doctor used that badge, convinced them he was this Reichsthingummy."

"He'd never get away with it," said Pop.

"You don't know the Doctor," said Ace. "He's got the cheek of the devil -

sometimes I think he is the devil."

"You don't mean it actually worked?" asked Ma Barker.

Ace nodded. "Believe me, it worked like a charm. We're both staying at Freikorps HQ -with the whole Freikorps jumping whenever the Doctor opens his mouth."

It was Ma Barker who pointed out the apparent flaw in her story. "If you and your mate are so well in with the Freikorps - how come you ended up with me on that truck?"

Ace groaned. What was that about weaving tangled webs? "We're supposed to be making some mysterious investigation into the British resistance movement, right? So the Doctor spun them a yarn about how I was being forced to help trap you so I could use it as a cover to find you and help you. I know it sounds daft, but it makes a sort of sense if you work it out."

"You're saying you're acting as a double agent," said Pop.

"That's right," said Ace. "That's it exactly."

"I don't like double agents," said Pop. "They get confused, forget which side they're really on."

"Like Arnie here," said Ma.

Pop said, "What do you reckon, Ma? Seems to me there's not much to choose between "em. Either we let them both go. . . "

"Or we kill "em both," said Ma cheerfully.

"Might be safer," said Pop.

"Better safe than sorry," said Ma. "Pity though. She seems like a nice kid really."

The knife was back at Ace's throat.

Pop covered the little man with his revolver. "Well, I shall miss you, Arnie, old chap," he said, with one of his sudden lapses into posh vowels. "No hard feelings, eh?"

There was the sudden roar of lorry engines from outside. Through the grimy glass Ace could just about make out the shapes of several lorries and of armed men jumping down.

"It's too late for all of us now," said Arnie bitterly. "I told you there was something going on round here. It's a raid!"

A megaphone-amplified voice blared at them from outside.

"This is a Field Unit of the British Freikorps. The area is surrounded. Do not move from where you are. Do not attempt to escape or you will be shot."

Hemmings jumped down from the lorry and watched the Freikorps unit swing into action. It was an operation they had carried out many times before. Already men were racing round to the back of the caf,, while others were making their way to the tops of nearby buildings to cover the roof.

Hemmings' sergeant, a burly man with a bruised face, ran up and saluted.

"Target secure, sir."

"Carry on."

The sergeant nodded to a corporal who ran to the cafe door and kicked it open, covering those inside with his Sten gun. Hemmings strolled inside. A peaceful and innocent scene met his eyes. A girl and a man sitting together at a table quietly drinking tea. A fat old woman wiping the counter, and a tall old man slicing a greasy-looking chunk

of corned beef.

"Fancy a cuppa char and a wad, sir?" said the old woman cheerfully. "It's only the ersatz corned beef, but you can put plenty of mustard on it. That's ersatz as well, of course. . ."

"Papers!" said the corporal, cutting through the flow of words.

"Don't bother," drawled Hemmings. "These ladies and gentlemen will be accompanying us back to HQ. Wait outside, will you, corporal? Oh, and send in my sergeant."

The corporal saluted and left.

Hemmings looked round the caf,. "Well, well, well! What a happy reunion!

And here's another old friend."

The sergeant with the bruised face came into the room and saluted. "That's the girl, sir," he said, pointing to Ace. "She joined up with the old woman there as soon as we left the release truck. I said I was going off to look for a drink. Then I hung about out of sight and followed them here."

"Well done, Sergeant. Write out your deposition back at HQ."

"Sir!" The Sergeant gave the Hitler salute and left.

Hemmings looked triumphantly at the girl, but she was still defiant.

"Well, well," said Ace. "The old beaten-up prisoner trick and I fell for it!"

She gave him a scornful look. "I don't know what you think you're up to. . ."

"Then let me tell you," interrupted Hemmings. "I put you on a truck with someone suspected of resistance activities - and I put one of my men on board as well. He sees you make contact with the suspect and accompany her to her - lair, shall we say? There I find you consorting with a number of other suspicious characters. We've had our suspicions of Ma Barker for a very long time - and her friend here's been on our wanted list for many years." He nodded to the old man behind the counter. "A pleasure to meet you at last, Major Popplewell. You were one of Colonel Gubbins" stalwarts, I believe? You've had a

long run, but it's over now."

"Dunno what you mean, Guv," said the old man stolidly.

The girl still wouldn't give up. "Listen, you pompous twit, I'm supposed to contact the resistance. That was the whole point of this morning's charade.

And it worked, too - I was on the way to gaining their trust till you turned up."

"Ah, but there's the cunning of it," said Hemmings almost admiringly. "You were making contact with the resistance under cover of making contact with the resistance. The classic double bluff. Brilliant!"

"Rubbish! You've no proof."

"I shall have all the proof I need soon after we get back to HQ - signed confessions from all of you."

"I wouldn't bank on it, ducks," said Ma Barker.

"Oh, everybody confesses - eventually." Hemmings looked round the little group. Three of the faces were hard and determined. He turned his attention to the fourth. "Besides, even if you three hold out, there's always Mr. Arnold. In return for a promise of immunity, he'll sign a confession implicating the lot of you. Then I shoot you and close the file."

Everyone looked at Arnold, but he wouldn't look back. Hemmings smiled. It was quite clear they all realized he was right. Arnold would say anything to save his skin.

The girl made a last desperate effort. "Look, you know who the Doctor really is.

. . "

"I know what he is. That funny little man of yours is a fake. I know it. I feel it in my guts."

"What guts?" said the girl contemptuously.

Hemmings smiled happily, feeling the familiar warm glow.. "You really do ask for it, don't you? What are you, some kind of masochist? Don't worry, I can provide all the pain you need." He drew back his fist.

Ace stood poised, ready to duck - and to retaliate with a kick that would ruin Hemmings" elegant pose for quite some time. She had decided, quite calmly, that her best chance was to provoke him into killing her. Then she heard a voice from the doorway.

"Any chance of a cup of tea and a currant bun?"

It was the Doctor, looking fittingly sinister in his black leather coat, black hat and monocle. The effect was only slightly spoiled by the red-handled umbrella, which seemed to add a note of unsuitable frivolity.

"Splendid!" said Hemmings happily. "A clean sweep."

"Ah, but who is the sweeper, and who the swept?" said the Doctor mysteriously. "How does the poet put it?

If the Red Slayer thinks he slays

Or if he thinks that he be slain

He knows not well the subtle ways

I touch and pass and touch again...

Something like that, anyway. Time for another spin of the wheel, I think!"

The Doctor stepped aside and to Ace's astonishment General Strasser came into the cafe. Behind him were two stormtroopers, not from the Freikorps but from the dreaded SS.

The Doctor's voice crackled with authority. "General, I regret to say that through a combination of malignance and stupidity, this officer has come close to ruining a most delicate and vital operation, essential to the security of the Reich."

General Strasser looked worried. "I am distressed to hear it, Herr Doktor. If there is anything I can do?"

"There is," said the Doctor decisively. "If he can be arrested and held incommunicado, the situation may yet be saved."

"Of course, Herr Doktor," said General Strasser. "Nothing could be simpler." He nodded to the two SS men, who moved to either side of Hemmings, taking him in charge.

"My General - "-began Hemmings. He broke off with a gasp of agony

as one of the stormtroopers delivered a brutal kidney punch.

"I do not think I gave you permission to speak," said Strasser placidly.

"Would it assist the security of your operation, Herr Doktor, if this unfortunate officer were to hang himself in his cell? Better yet, he could be shot trying to escape - here and now, if you wish."

Go for it, Doctor! thought Ace.

For a moment the Doctor looked tempted, then he shook his head.

"Perhaps not. It is possible his conduct has been overzealous rather than actually treasonable. With your permission I will conduct a full inquiry when time permits. Meanwhile..."

"Of course, Herr Doktor. He shall be held at your disposal." General Strasser snapped his fingers and the SS stormtroopers marched Hemmings away.

The General looked round the room. "And these others?"

"The nucleus of a resistance cell," said the Doctor calmly. "Located by my assistant here - and turned."

"Incredible!" murmured the General. "And all in one day, less than one day."

"In due time," said the Doctor impressively, "they will lead us to their colleagues - all their colleagues. But for the moment, they must have complete freedom of action, freedom from surveillance even. If their fellow conspirators even suspect..."

"Say no more, Herr Doktor. I shall leave them entirely to you." The General looked round the little cafe, seeming to feel something more was expected of him. "A most charming little hostelry," he murmured.

"Care for a nice cuppa, General?" said Ma Barker wheedlingly. "Or a nice slice of ersatz corned beef? On the house naturally - we'd be honoured..."

"Thank you, no," said the General hastily. "Some other time, perhaps. If you will forgive me, Herr Doktor?"

The Doctor showed him out. They heard shouted orders, the sound of departing cars and trucks.

The Doctor reappeared in the doorway. He stripped off his hat and coat and flung them over a chair. "What about that cuppa, then?" he asked plaintively. "And is there any danger of any food? I'm so hungry I could even tackle ersatz corned beef."

"Real ham for you, Doctor," said Pop, reaching under the counter. "And all you can eat."

Ma Barker poured a hot strong cup of tea and carried it over to the Doctor.

"Gets a Freikorps Lieutenant arrested, shops us to the Gestapo and gets us right off the hook, all in one breath," she said admiringly. She looked at Ace. "You're quite right, ducks."

"What about?"

Ma Barker beamed. "About your little mate, here. He's got the cheek of the devil..."

10: VANISHING TRICK

"I tell you that's it, Doctor," said Ace. "That's all, the lot! My brain feels like a squeezed lemon at half-time."

It was later that day and they were back in their riverside suite at the Savoy, sitting out on the balcony to avoid the hidden microphones in their rooms. It was a fine afternoon; and the river glistened in the sun. On the other side, you could just see the Festival pavilions.

"You've got to admit, the view's better here than in the bathroom,"

said Ace.

She had just finished recounting every detail of her conversation with Pop and Ma Barker. The Doctor had made her go through it over and over again, and now he was brooding over what she'd said.

"Will they be all right?" she asked.

The Doctor was staring abstractedly at the slow-moving river. "Who?"

"Pop, Ma Barker, even that little rat Arnold. . . "

"They should be. They'll have to give up the cafe, of course, find new identities and a new HQ but they're used to that. Strasser thinks they're acting as double agents for me, so with any luck no one should bother them for quite a while. . . "

"That was quite a good offer old Strasser made - about Hemmings, I mean.

You should have taken him up on it."

"I was tempted - especially when I saw your face." The Doctor shook his head wearily. "Good grief, what am I saying? It's quite true you know. All power corrupts. Absolute power corrupts absolutely."

"What do you mean? We're not corrupt."

"Aren't we? Yet here we sit, calmly discussing cold-blooded murder - just because someone punched you on the nose. We've got to get away from this place."

"Can't be too soon for me!"

"How does it feel? The nose, I mean?"

Cautiously Ace touched the end of her nose. "Not too bad."

"I've got some Sisterhood Salve back in the TARDIS somewhere."

"What's that?"

"You might call it a miracle product," said the Doctor solemnly. "It'll clear up your bruises in no time and make your skin look years younger."

"Are we leaving straight away?"

"Pretty soon," said the Doctor. "I don't think there's much more to be learned here."

"Was it any use - all that stuff I got from Ma Barker and Pop?"

"Most of it was just routine horrors, I'm afraid. The Nazis made all those plans for England in your time-stream - the documents were found after the war."

"Only this time they won," said Ace broodingly. "So they got to carry them all out."

For a moment she sat silent, thinking of the grim picture the two old people had painted so matter-of-factly. Massacres and deportations, starvation and oppression. Routine horrors. "I tell you what, Professor," she said. "I'm not crazy about the England I come from, but it's a bloody sight better than this one."

"The most interesting bit was all that black magic stuff," said the Doctor thoughtfully.

"How come?"

"Well, it's always been a bit of a mystery to me."

"What has?"

"How the Nazi party came to power in the first place," said the Doctor patiently.

"What's so mysterious about it? They were just ordinary politicians, weren't they?"

"Have you any idea what they were like when they started out? A broken down drug-addicted ex-pilot, a failed chicken farmer, an unsuccessful snob of a champagne salesman with a fake title and a ratty little lecher embittered by a club foot. A gang of total deadbeats, led by a paranoid failed art student."

Ace shrugged. "Like I said, politicians!"

"Amazingly successful ones! One minute they're only one jump ahead of the law, next thing they're running the country, and before you know where you are they're in control of half the world."

"Well, I suppose if you put it like that." Ace wasn't really convinced. To her all politicians were weird and slightly suspect anyway. Why

should the Nazis be any different?

"It's always struck me as a bit of a historical oddity," said the Doctor.

"Another of the peculiarities of your peculiar little planet. I've been meaning to look into it for ages, but you know how things pile up. I always thought they might have had a bit of help somehow."

"Magic help?"

"Something disguised as magic, perhaps. They're a superstitious lot. The SS is as much a mystic order as a private army."

"So we're going to Germany?"

"Yes, but to pre-war Germany, Ace, where it all began."

"Why?"

"Because it's easier to pluck up a seedling than tear down a tree," said the Doctor poetically.

"Let's get going, then."

"Not quite yet, Ace. There's something I've got to do first."

"Such as?"

"Go and see Hemmings."

"Forget it, Professor. I expect Strasser will get round to having him shot sooner or later, that or leave him there till he rots."

The Doctor turned his grey eyes on her in what Ace always thought of as the "look". The one that made her feel as if her brain had been peeled and all the nasty impulses exposed.

"All right, all right," she said uneasily. "Where do we meet?"

"At the TARDIS of course."

"You're sure it's here?"

The Doctor nodded. "Positive. General Strasser came to see me in a great state about it."

"What did you tell him?"

"The truth, more or less."

"You told him it was a time machine?"

"No, of course not. But I told him it was packed with top-secret, highly dangerous electronic equipment - quite true, actually - and he was happy to let me take charge of it."

"Where is it now?"

The Doctor beamed. "Down below in a locked storeroom to which I alone have the key."

"How do I find it?"

The Doctor grabbed some hotel stationery and did a quick sketch. "You remember where we were first locked up, down below?"

Ace nodded.

"There's a whole network of cellars and corridors under this place. Some of them have been converted into cells and interrogation rooms, but some are still used for storage. The TARDIS is in an old wine cellar here. Give me a start and then come and meet me there."

The Doctor headed for the door. As he reached the threshold Ace called out, "Professor!"

The Doctor paused. "What?"

"Just don't give him my best."

The Doctor crossed the crowded lobby of the hotel and went through the door that led to the lower regions. He showed Strasser's pass to a respectful SS guard, who led him along the dimly lit corridors to Hemmings"

cell and let him in.

He found Hemmings sitting on the bunk, staring at the blank wall. The Doctor turned to the guard. "Wait outside, please."

"Are you sure, Herr Doktor? This man is a dangerous traitor and criminal

"Out!"

The guard went out, closing and locking the door.

The Doctor leaned his back against it. "Noughts and crosses is a good way to pass the time, if you've got a pencil and someone to play with."

Hemmings looked up. "You devil - you cunning little devil!"

"Cunning?" said the Doctor thoughtfully. "Well, yes, I have to be sometimes. And as for little, these things are relative, you know. I've been much smaller than this. As a matter of fact, I was once in grave danger of being washed down the plughole. But devil? We make our own devils, and our own hell."

"Do we? Well, you put me in this one."

"At least it's familiar," said the Doctor. "It's one where you've sent plenty of other people. And if I put you here - who put you in that uniform?"

"I was thirteen when England lost the war. What was I supposed to do?

Wait till I grew old enough to be deported as slave labour? I soon saw there were winners and losers in this world, and I decided to join the winners. I was lucky to get in the Freikorps, but I did get in, and I did well."

The Doctor nodded. "And it all ends here."

"Only because of you!" Hemmings" eyes glittered with hatred. "Look, you've won, so satisfy my curiosity, grant the condemned man his last wish. I was right, wasn't I? You are a fake?"

The Doctor shrugged. "A fake? I'm not sure. That's relative too. If it's any consolation to you, I'm certainly not the Reichsinspektor-General."

"Where is he, the real one?"

"Who knows? Rochester, Gravesend, Southampton... Perhaps he'll float all the way to Germany."

"You killed him?"

"Somebody did. I took his place. Nature abhors a vacuum, you know. Still, enough about me, let's talk about you."

"There's no me to talk about. I'm a dead man waiting for the funeral."

"Not necessarily," said the Doctor. "I could help you."

"You help me? Why?"

"I don't think you'd understand. Besides, it's not a matter of why but of how."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"I don't like to leave you here - but I refuse to restore you to your former position. What I will do is help you to escape. I'll give you a good start, and tell General Strasser when you're well away." The Doctor paused. "I shall also tell him you are a dangerous criminal who must be shot on sight -so don't even think about coming back here."

"I'll be hunted. . . "

"It'll give you a chance to see what you and your Nazi masters have done to England."

"It's not much of a proposition, Herr Doktor."

"Are you expecting a better offer today?"

Hemmings stood up. "All right."

"Go for the guard when he comes in, I'll do the rest." The Doctor rapped on the; door and the SS guard came in.

Immediately Hemmings attacked him. The Doctor slipped behind the struggling guard, draped an affectionate arm round his shoulders, and closed powerful fingers on a pressure-point. The guard slumped on to the bunk. The Doctor's other hand twitched his keys from his pocket as he fell.

The Doctor and Hemmings slipped out into the corridor and the Doctor locked the cell door behind them.

"What will you tell them, about my escape?" asked Hemmings curiously as he followed the Doctor along the gloomy corridors.

"Obviously you overpowered the guard. I wasn't even there."

"Suppose the guard says different?"

"He won't. The Venusian nerve-pinch induces short-term amnesia -" The Doctor heard a whisper of movement and turned, but too late.

Time Lords are by no means invulnerable, and Hemmings" rabbit-punch, delivered with the strength of desperation, slammed the Doctor to the ground.

Hemmings gave the body a quick kick then turned and ran. He was making for the upper levels, and Strasser's office. If he could relay the Doctor's confession and be believed, if he could even persuade Strasser to check...

It was a risk that had to be taken. He hadn't considered accepting the Doctor's offer of escape for a single moment. For Hemmings, life without rank and position was no life at all.

Ace was pacing uneasily up and down the suite. Grabbing the Doctor's map she decided to set off. If she reached the TARDIS before the Doctor she'd simply wait for him. She went out of the room and down to the main lobby. Then, like the Doctor before her, she went through the side door that led down below. At the bottom of the steps she consulted the Doctor's map, and began moving along the underground corridors. The air felt dank and cold, and dusty electric bulbs hanging at intervals from the whitewashed ceiling gave a dim, yellowish light. Ace had her pass ready in case she was challenged, but there didn't seem to be anyone about.

Not far away, Hemmings too was hurrying along the dimly lit corridors, wondering why the whole area seemed to be empty. Usually there were patrolling guards, prisoners being delivered or released, dead or unconscious bodies being dragged away, the grim sounds of interrogation.

He shot round a corner and stopped in amazement before a strange blue box. It was the Doctor's box, the one his own men had fetched from the Festival site. The box should be locked away in a storeroom. But it wasn't, it was here – and the door was open. A voice was calling to him, inside his head.

Like a sleepwalker, Hemmings walked up to the open door of the box and went inside. The door closed, and the box faded away with a strange wheezing groaning sound -just as Ace ran by the end of the corridor. She stopped and stared unbelievingly . . .

The Doctor awoke just a few seconds later, stiff-necked but otherwise unharmed. He hurried towards the wine cellar, puzzled but thankful that the corridors were so empty. He reached an arched door halfway along a corridor, produced a key and opened it. There stood the

TARDIS, safe and sound.

He heard movement behind him, too much movement to be just Ace. He turned and saw General Strasser, flanked by two SS stormtroopers with machine pistols.

"Not leaving us already, Doctor?" said Strasser. "Tell me, can that strange object really be a time-travel device? Its uses to the Reich will be incalculable. How pleased with me they will be in Berlin! It will even make up for the sad death of the ReichsinspektorGeneral."

The jig was up and the Doctor knew it. "How did you know?"

"The river gave up its dead. There were other papers on the body. Just to make sure, I had more microphones installed on the balcony as well. Built into the ornamental ironwork, I believe. Once I'd heard your plans, I had the corridors cleared, just to make things easier for you."

"Very thorough."

"You know, I always thought you were just a little too good to be true, Doctor," said General Strasser thoughtfully. "And the performance at the cafe was a little rich, even for me. Oh, and Hemmings" cell was bugged too, of course. I'm afraid that clinched it."

"My own fault," said the Doctor. "I just can't get used to living in a society of snoops. Can we make any kind of deal?"

"I fear not, Doctor," said Strasser with genuine regret. "I like you, I really do, and I admire your nerve - but I fear your cunning and your silver tongue. You've made rather a fool of me you know. I'm not sure who or what you are – but I am sure I can't afford to have you around any more."

"I see," said the Doctor. "Shot while trying to escape, is it?"

"I'm afraid so," said Strasser apologetically. He gestured down the corridor.

"Would you care to run a little, just for the look of the thing? Not much of a course, but you could zig-zag a bit if you liked."

The Doctor looked at the little corridor, and at the two guards. "I don't think I'll bother."

"Goodbye then, Doctor," said General Strasser. He stepped back and the stormtroopers raised their machine pistols.

The Doctor knew he was facing death. Even Time Lords can be killed. The bullet-clips of two machine pistols, emptied into his body at close range, would shatter both his hearts and kill him just as surely as they would any human.

He was no stranger to death. He had undergone the little death of regeneration, and he had faced, many times, the great death that ends all lives. The Doctor emptied his mind, as the old hermit had taught him, and prepared to meet his fate, whatever it might be.

The stormtroopers were used to killing. They had seen grim defiance, tears and pleas for mercy. But never before had they encountered the massive calm of the unimpressive little figure before them. They hesitated - just a moment too long.

A voice shouted, "Get down, Professor!"

Inevitably the stormtroopers looked towards the sound - and in that second the Doctor threw himself down and rolled over and over, disappearing behind the TARDIS.

General Strasser and his two stormtroopers saw Ace, her hand raised behind her head. They saw her arm sweep down, and something shining flash towards them. They saw the something smash against the wall, and heard a deafening crack. The last thing they saw - literally the last thing -

was the wall curving gracefully like a sail. It collapsed, as did the ceiling above it, burying all three of them deep in rubble. Nitro-nine will do that, scientifically applied.

Ace came dashing through the dust clouds and helped the Doctor to his feet. The Doctor opened the TARDIS door and they shot inside. Seconds later the TARDIS faded away.

The Third Reich greatly regrets the tragic death of General of the SS Otto Strasser in a dastardly terrorist attack on Freikorps Headquarters. It is feared that Lieutenant Hemmings, one of the Freikorps" most valued young officers, perished in the same attack, though his body has not yet been found. Rumours that a high-ranking Reich official and his female assistant were killed in the same tragic incident are completely without foundation.

No such official exists.

PART TWO 1923 PUTSCH

After the defeat of Germany in 1918, the resulting chaos threw up a number of minor political parties and splinter groups, now more or less forgotten. Amongst them was the National Socialist German Workers Party, founded in 1919 by Anton Drexler and Dietrich Erhart. With its cunningly chosen populist policies, a windy mixture of nationalism, socialism and, above all, anti-Semitism, the party enjoyed a modest success in the early twenties, thanks mainly to the rabble-rousing abilities of an ex-serviceman called Adolf Hittler, or Hitler. The party held a number of meetings in the beer halls of Munich, most of them ending in battles between National Socialist supporters and their Communist opponents.

However, the new party ruined whatever hopes it might have had of lasting political success with a ludicrously inept and ill-timed attempt at a political coup in Munich in September 1923, which led eventually to the new-born party being banned. Enlisting the support of the old, confused, now almost senile war hero General Ludendorf, the man Hittler led an armed rabble of followers in a march on the War Ministry . . .

From Ballots, Blood and Bullets -Political Chaos in Post-War Germany, by Professor Karl Muller. Published Berlin 1927.

This work was suppressed and its author executed when the National Socialist Party came to power in 1933.

1: Interlude

The Doctor was hunched over the time-path indicator studying the bright green trace. "We overshot a little the last time. We need to go back."

Ace was slumped in the chair, beating brick dust out of her clothes. "How far back?"

"That's just the trouble. A slight miscalculation and we could end up arguing with Attila the Hun. I thought you'd given up nitro-nine?"

"Well, you know how it is, Professor," said Ace uneasily.

"Do I?"

"I was pottering about in the TARDIS lab, just doodling really, a pinch of this, "a few grains of that. Before I knew where I was..."

"I know. Nitro-nine."

"Nitro-nine-a, actually," Ace said proudly. "New and improved with added pizzazz! Concentrated too, twice the whammy for half the weight." She fished in her pocket and produced three large glass marbles.

The Doctor regarded them with suspicion. "Is it any more stable?"

"Well, marginally. It takes a severe impact to detonate. You have to chuck it, not just drop it."

The Doctor shuddered. "How many have you got?" "Just the three now. I only had time to make four."

"Well, put them away - and wrap them in your hanky or something. By the way, thanks."

"My pleasure... Professor, I didn't tell you."

"Tell me what?"

"On my way to the storeroom, I thought I saw a TARDIS - another TARDIS

- dematerializing in one of the corridors."

"Good grief! Are you sure?"

Ace shrugged. "Dunno. I thought I saw a flash of blue and heard the sound, but when I went to look there was nothing there. For a minute I thought you'd left without me."

The Doctor frowned. "Could have been temporal refraction, a freak foreshadowing of our own departure. Odd, though... Still, nothing we can do about it now."

He made a minute adjustment to the controls. "Well, that's the best I can do." He patted the console. "The rest is up to you, old girl!"

Ace could never quite get used to the way the Doctor treated the TARDIS

like an intelligent living being. "You're letting the TARDIS decide where we go?"

"Not entirely. I'm using the time-path indicator to lead us into :he right spatio-temporal segment, and leaving the TARDIS to lo the fine tuning."

"How will it - "

"She!" whispered the Doctor. "If you hurt her feelings she'll sulk."

Ace gave him a look. "How will she know?"

"The Timewyrm still has parts of the TARDIS within herself remember, and I have a Timewyrm implant lodged in the telepathic circuits. TARDIS and Timewyrm are linked: Since I'm linked to the TARDIS, I'm linked to the Timewyrm as well."

"Forever?"

"Until one or the other of us is destroyed," said the Doctor matter-of-factly.

"So the TARDIS can always take us to the Timewyrm?"

"Well, that's what I'd hoped. Unfortunately, it doesn't seem o be quite that precise."

"How do you mean?" "Well, let's say, wherever the TARDIS takes us, the Timewyrm won't be far away or will be arriving sometime soon. . ."

"Or will have left quite some time ago?" suggested Ace. "Hence our little trip to Occupied Britain?"

The Doctor nodded. "Let's hope we have better luck this time." He knelt down and began rooting through a little-used storage locker in the base of the console, emerging eventually with a dusty stone pot. "There you are, Ace. Something for your sore nose and fat lip."

She unscrewed the lid. "It's almost empty, Doctor. There's just a little

dab of some kind of cream left in the bottom."

"A little dab is all you need. Try it."

"All right. I need to clean up anyway. I might have a swim as well..."

After a quick dip in the TARDIS pool Ace returned to her quarters for a shower and a change of clothes. She was about to leave when she saw the Doctor's stone pot standing on her dressing table. She put a little of the cream on the end of her finger and smoothed it into her nose and upper lip.

The results were astonishing. The redness and soreness vanished straight away and her skin looked not only as good but better than before. Still clutching the pot she rushed back into the main control room, where the Doctor stood brooding over the console, comparing its readings with those of the time-path indicator.

"This stuffs terrific, Professor! Where on Earth did you get it?,

"Where on Karn, you mean!"

She studied the symbols carved round the side of the pot. "What does all this mean?" The Doctor took the pot. "It's Old High Gallifreyan. It says: *Dr Solon's Special Morbius Lotion. Guaranteed to Contain Genuine Elixir of Life. Manufactured Under Licence by the Sisterhood of Karn."*

"Well, it's terrific! You could make a fortune!"

"I doubt it, the production rate's too low. They only make one pot every hundred years. . . "

The rise and fall of the central column was starting to slow down.

"Nice timing, Ace," said the Doctor. "We're nearly there."

"Nearly where, Professor? And nearly when?"

"That, my dear Ace, is very much the question."

The Doctor took his black leather coat from the hatstand. "This will probably still be in fashion." He nodded towards the hatstand. "I got you something suitable from the wardrobe room."

Ace took down a fawn trenchcoat and a soft brown felt hat and put them on. "How do I look, Professor?"

"Romantic and mysterious."

Ace studied herself in the long mirror. "I look like Marlene Dietrich on a bad day. Professor?"

"What?"

"If we're landing in Germany, they'll all be talking German, won't they?"

"It seems very likely."

"Well, I skived off most of my German lessons - and I never even took the exam.

"Don't worry, you'll manage. You always do, don't you? You didn't take O-level Cheetah either."

"I suppose you speak fluent German?"

"I speak fluent everything," said the Doctor. "Come on, we've arrived."

2: REVOLUTION

MEMO TOP SECRET

Suitable as the Subject seems in many ways, I still have grave reservations. He is deluded and unstable and ever prone to paranoia. The prospect of complete breakdown cannot be discounted. You urge that his enormous mental energy makes him particularly suitable for the Project, yet this energy is in itself a matter of some concern, since its source continues to elude us. Nor is he easy to control - as witness the proposed attempt at a coup. However, my recommendation is that we allow it to proceed. When it fails, as it almost certainly will, the Subject will be defeated and vulnerable, and ripe for the Process.

In addition the attempt at a coup will provide valuable data as to the Subject's behaviour under stress. For this reason it is imperative that you keep the Subject under close observation at all times.

The TARDIS had materialized in an alleyway just off along narrow street lined with tall old houses. From the end of the alley came the rumble of excited voices. On the street corner a crowd was gathering around a man in a shabby raincoat. He stood on a wooden box, surrounded by a bodyguard of armed men. Beside him was an immensely tall and dignified old man in a brown hunting jacket.

Behind them both stood a young man in uniform, staggering under the weight of a huge swastika banner.

The man on the box was making a speech, and the Doctor and Ace edged closer to listen. The speaker was Adolf Hitler, a younger version of the famous face but even then with lank black hair falling over his forehead and that same scrubby moustache.

It was a wild, rambling speech, sometimes muttered, sometimes shouted, and Ace wasn't all that impressed. The crowd seemed to like it, though.

"There is a race," screamed Hitler, "which, for thousands of years, has not possessed a state of its own, but has instead spread over all the world.

They are not peasants or farmers, instead they have conquered the money markets, beginning in poverty and now rich in vermin, vice and pestilence, grimly determined not to serve us but to rule. I say these Jews must be swept away!"

Ace gave the Doctor an angry look. "Did you hear what he said?"

"That's telling "em" said a mild-looking man beside them. "Bloody yids, they get all the money and all the jobs!" Ace swung round angrily on him but the Doctor grabbed her arm, shaking his head. Reluctantly Ace subsided.

Hitler rambled on, turning his attack to the post-war treaty that had taken German territories and was forcing her to pay crippling reparations. "Follow me!" he screamed. "Follow me and these evils shall be swept away, and Germany will be great once more. Germany awake! To the War Office!"

The excited crowd roared and the procession set off down the street. In front went the man with the swastika banner. Behind him marched Hitler and the tall old man. Behind them marched a tall fat man and a much slighter one looking, thought Ace, curiously like Laurel and Hardy.

Behind this leading group came a motley crowd of supporters, some uniformed, some not, some with rifles and bayonets, others brandishing revolvers. Despite the presence of all these weapons, there was a cheerful, holidayish feeling in the air, as though most of the crowd were just out for a lark.

Ace grabbed the Doctor's arm. "What's happening? What's he doing?"

"Seizing power, or trying to."

"Is he going to make it?" "Come and see."

The street was so narrow that it acted like a funnel, jamming the procession into a tightly packed mass. As they followed the crowd the Doctor said,

"We're in Munich, Ace, in 1923. The whole country's in an uproar, and Hitler and his gang are trying to stage a coup."

"Who's that other one - the tall old man?"

"General Ludendorf, a big hero from the First World War. He's just a figurehead really, doesn't know what's going on."

They were near the end of the narrow street now, and Ace saw that it opened out into a big public square. Blocking the entrance to the square was a cordon of green-uniformed police, armed with rifles.

"That square's called the Odeonplatz," said the Doctor. "They have to cross it to seize the War Ministry on the other side."

"But the cops won't let them?"

"Not if they can help it. Their problem is they don't want to open fire in case they hurt old Ludendorf. He's still a public hero."

The head of the procession came nearer and nearer to the cordon of police. The police raised their rifles. One of the men close to Hitler rushed forward shouting, "Don't shoot! General Ludendorf is here!"

A policeman shouted, "Halt! Halt and turn back!" Laughing and cheering the procession surged forward - and the police opened fire. They didn't shoot into the crowd, though. Instead they aimed their rifles downwards and fired at the granite paving stones. Chips of stone and ricocheting bullets struck the front ranks of the procession, and straight away the would-be revolutionaries turned and ran, Hitler among them. Ace saw him stumble and fall, and the crowd trample over him.

"Up here!" yelled the Doctor. He grabbed Ace's arm and they retreated up the steps of a big old house. From the shelter of the doorway they watched the chaotic scene.

The rattle of rifle fire was still coming from the direction of the police cordon and the crowd was streaming down the narrow street in full retreat.

The air was full of screams and shouts, and Ace saw people forcing their way into shops and houses, kicking in windows and climbing through -

anything to get off the street.

Most of the crowd had moved past by now, though here and there bodies had been left behind on the ground, some moaning and twitching, some lying still. They saw the fat man who'd been one of the leaders of the procession stagger away across the square, clutching at his stomach.

"There goes poor old Goering," said the Doctor. "One of those granite splinters got him... Ah, here's our man!"

A muddy figure was crawling along the pavement towards them, sobbing with pain. It was Adolf Hitler. He was bruised and battered, and obviously in such pain that he was scarcely able to move.

"Is he wounded?" asked Ace. "Seriously, I hope?"

The Doctor shook his head. "Just bashed about a bit. Come on!"

To Ace's amazement, the Doctor ran down the steps and helped Hitler to rise, supporting him as he staggered along the street.

For Adolf Hitler the pain of defeat was even fiercer than the agony in his shoulder. The people he had tried to lead to glory had broken and fled. And what had happened to him? Not gloriously killed, not even honourably wounded. Simply knocked to the ground, and trampled into the mud - by his own followers as they ran away! He became aware that someone was helping him to his feet. The someone had a companion, a girl.

"What are you doing, Professor?" she called, her voice disapproving.

"Helping someone who's hurt," said the man. "Come on, let's get him into the doorway."

The girl came to his other side and they half-led, half-carried him up the steps and laid him down in the doorway.

Hitler stared wildly up at them. The man was small and dark with penetrating grey eyes, the girl young, round-faced, not unattractive. He had never seen them before in his life.

The man said, "Are you wounded?"

Hitler shook his head. "My shoulder - I fell." He winced as the stranger unbuttoned his muddy trenchcoat and felt inside. "Thought so - left shoulder's dislocated. Not too serious, but agonizingly painful."

"Good," said the girl in that same hostile voice.

Hitler stared up at the man. "Are you a doctor?"

"You might say I'm the Doctor," said the little man modestly. "Just let me turn you over." With swift confident movements, he turned Hitler face down.

He put one hand on the bony shoulder blade, grasped the left arm with the other and pushed and pulled at the same time. There was a moment of intolerable agony and Adolf Hitler screamed.

Slowly the tide of pain receded. Hitler struggled to sit up. "I've reset your shoulder for you," said the little man briskly. "A bit rough and ready - but it'll have to do." He snatched the scarf from around Hitler's neck, and used it to put his left arm in a rough sling. "It will be better now, but you still need medical attention and rest."

Hitler said hoarsely, "I have friends nearby - another doctor, waiting in case of trouble. There is a yellow Fiat, parked in the Max-Josephsplatz. . . "

"Then we'd better get you there," said the Doctor. "Walk as steadily as you can. Try to look like an innocent bystander."

They helped him down the steps and set off along the glass-strewn pavement, supporting him between them.

As they walked along Hitler muttered, "I don't know you. Are you party members, supporters?"

The girl said, "Not on your -"

The man waved her to silence. "No," he said. "Just casual passers-by. You might say we're observers."

Deep inside Hitler's mind something alien stirred, writhing in

impotent rage.

She sensed the presence of the enemy, close, so close - and his mind was closed to her, it spurned her. But her time would come...

Hitler came to a sudden halt, staring blindly in front of him.

"What's the matter?" said the stranger.

Hitler became aware of the grey eyes staring into his own. He shook his head to clear it and turned away. "Nothing. I get these dizzy spells - the strain. . ." He moved on, looking despondently around him. His brief attempt at revolution was already over. The dead and wounded were being taken away, and people were coming cautiously out of their houses to see what was happening. It was finished - and he had failed. Was it worth going on?

As they moved along the street, a dark figure scuttled behind them at a safe distance, dodging from tree to tree like a giant black spider.

The Doctor shook his head, oppressed by strange forebodings. He felt as if his enemies were gathering around him.

Max-Josephsplatz was only a few streets away, and the yellow Fiat was waiting, parked on the other side of the square. Hitler stopped at the corner, gazing intently at the Doctor. "I shall always be grateful for your help. I should like to repay you but I have nothing to offer." He laughed bitterly. "Half an hour ago I hoped to rule Germany - now I am a hunted fugitive. I shall be lucky to escape arrest, perhaps even execution... I have failed, totally. I shall commit suicide - it is the only honourable thing to do!"

He heard the girl mutter something that sounded like "Good!" Once again the little man silenced her. He put a hand on Hitler's shoulder, the good one, and looked deeply into his eyes.

"Listen to me. You have failed today, but you will not always fail."

Hitler stared at him. "What do you mean? How do you know that?,

"One day you will rule Germany. Not for many years, but that day will come. When it does, we shall meet again. All I ask is that you remember me!"

There was something oddly compelling, and utterly convincing, in the little man's quiet voice, and Hitler knew he was somehow telling the

truth. It wasn't over after all. One day he would rise to supreme power, leading Germany into a glorious future. His destiny was certain.

"I shall always remember you, Doctor," said Adolf Hitler hoarsely. "You have given me new hope. If those hopes are fulfilled, you shall have any reward that is in my power." He turned and strode towards the waiting car.

As he reached it the passenger door opened for him. He paused for a moment, and raised his right hand in salute. "Goodbye, Doctor!"

He got stiffly into the little car, the door closed, and the Fiat trundled away.

Behind him the Doctor heard Ace whisper fiercely, "Goodbye, Adolph!"

A sudden instinct made him turn and he saw Ace's hand emerge from her pocket and her arm go back.

"No!" yelled the Doctor, and grabbed her arm.

He didn't manage to stop her throw, but he spoiled her aim. The glass capsule of nitro-nine-a landed several feet to the left of the departing car, blasting a huge crater in the road. The Fiat wobbled wildly, and then shot off into the distance.

Alarmed, the dark scuttling figure ducked back out of sight.

The Doctor let go of the struggling Ace. "And just what do you think you're doing?"

"You heard that racist filth he was spouting just now. We've seen the kind of England he'll make if he's not stopped. I thought we were here to change history Professor!"

The Doctor grabbed her arm and began marching her away. "Only as much as we absolutely have to. Changing history is a delicate operation - like brain surgery. You don't start by sawing the patient's head off!"

"I'd like to have blown his head off." muttered Ace.

The dark figure moved closer, unobserved by the man and the girl who were arguing furiously. With rising joy, he saw that he was right.

It was the Doctor. The appearance was changed but he recognized the voice, the movements, the very soul of the Time Lord he had hated for so many long years. His old enemy was delivered into his hands. Far quicker than he had hoped the Doctor had taken the bait. What a pity he must die without knowing who had killed him! Carefully the figure adjusted the energy weapon...

"All right, suppose you had killed him," said the Doctor impatiently. "What would have happened then?"

"How do I know? Whatever it was, it would have been an improvement."

"How can you be so sure?"

"Well, it stands to reason..."

"Does it?" said the Doctor furiously. "In history, the real history Hitler's Thousand Year Reich lasted from 1933 to 1945. Twelve years and that was it. Finished."

"So?"

"The main reason was that Hitler was an incompetent madman. You blow him to bits and maybe a competent madman takes charge. Someone who really can make the Reich last for a thousand years."

"All right, Doctor, you win," said Ace wearily.

From somewhere nearby a voice whispered, "No, Doctor, you lose!" A dark figure stepped out from behind a tree further down the street, a long slender cane in its hand. There. was a fierce crackle of power.

The Doctor dodged, not quite quickly enough, and the energy beam singed the top of his ear and the brim of his hat. The beam swept upwards, severing a heavy tree branch which crashed down into the street, missing them by inches.

Ace drew back her arm.

"Down, Ace!" yelled the Doctor, but the nitro-nine-a capsule was already on its way.

The tree behind which the would-be assassin was hiding rose high in the air - and so, presumably, did the assassin.

"Come on Ace!" yelled the Doctor. "Let's get back to the TARDIS while

some of Munich's still standing!"

They sprinted for the alleyway.

Back inside the TARDIS, the Doctor sank wearily into a chair.

"Thank you, Ace - again!"

"It's all right to blow up people who are shooting at you, then?"

"Every time - especially when they try to shoot me with energy weapons in 1923. All the same..." The Doctor held out his hand.

"What?" asked Ace innocently

"Hand it over."

"But it's my last one!"

"Hand it over, I said."

Reluctantly Ace produced her last capsule of nitro-nine-a.

The Doctor took it and slipped it into his pocket. "I really can't risk any more of your explosive alterations to history. You could disrupt the whole timestream." He examined the brim of his hat. "Look at that - ruined! And he hasn't done my ear much good either."

Ace was already scrabbling in the storage locker. "You can easily find another hat."

"What about my ear?"

She tossed him the stone jar. "Try this, there's just about enough left. If things keep up like this you'd better think about stocking up again."

Cautiously, the Doctor applied the lotion. "Now my left ear will be younger than the rest of me."

Ace nodded to the centre column. It was rising and falling, but very, very slowly. "Are we going somewhere or not?"

"I think we're just hovering in the Vortex: The Doctor took an electronic toolkit from a locker, removed a panel from the central control console, and set to work.

"What are you up to now?"

"Just a little experiment with the telepathic circuit." said the Doctor mysteriously.

Ace watched him working for a moment. "So what's the plan?"

The Doctor patted the console. "Ask her."

"Are you serious?"

"Absolutely - it's the TARDIS's plan, not mine. All I'm doing is picking up my cues."

"Is that what you were doing out there?"

The Doctor nodded. "That, and trying to change things as little as possible in the process:

"But you have changed things. You met Hitler and saved his bacon."

"Not really. According to recorded history, our Adolf really did escape from the Munich disaster with a badly dislocated shoulder. All I did was insert myself into his life-stream as unobtrusively as possible. We haven't really altered anything yet. Apart from a couple of chunks of Munich, that is -

they'll put that down to a bit of revolutionary bomb-chucking."

"What's going to happen - to him? Did he get arrested?"

"Oh yes, they caught him eventually."

"What happened?"

"He got five years for treason, served six months as a VIP prisoner writing Mein Kampf, got pardoned and came out a hero. Ten more years of dirty politics, and he finally managed to seize power."

And you think he had help?"

"I'm certain of it," said the Doctor thoughtfully. "From someone with an energy-weapon. Someone who knows me - and knew I was coming." He finished whatever he was doing, replaced the panel and put away the toolkit.

"What about the Timewyrm?" asked Ace.

"What indeed?" The Doctor produced his time-path indicator. It was

glowing brightly. According to this, she's not far away and the TARDIS has landed again. Shall we go?"

"Must we? I mean, if that was typical of Nazi politics. . ."

"Oh, no, no,- no!" said the Doctor. "Those were the early, innocent days.

After that it got quite nasty." He was staring abstractedly into space.

"What's the matter, Professor?"

"That was the first time I'd ever met Adolf," said the Doctor thoughtfully.

"But a while back, when he had a sort of minor fit on the way to the square, I felt I already knew him. It was as though someone familiar was looking at me through his eyes. Odd, that, very. . ."

He opened the TARDIS doors, letting in a blaze of light.

Searchlight beams played across the night sky and they heard the roar of an enormous crowd.

PART THREE 1939 WAR

MEMO TOP SECRET

The key to the entire Project is the use of the Subject to move and control ever-larger crowds through oratory. It is important to be clear about the basic method, pioneered by human politicians throughout the ages. It consists of the stimulation of such basic emotions as FEAR, LOVE, HATE, SUSPICION, PRIDE, ANGER, all in regular repeated sequences.

Reason and logic have little or nothing to do with it, and can actually limit the desired effect...

The Subject's performance still tends towards the erratic and we must continue to strive for more effective control. I recommend a steady but gradual increase in psychic amplification. Above all, we must avoid the dangers of overload.

1: Rally

Reichsmarshal Hermann Goering looked at the upraised faces, the outstretched right hands, the apparently endless sea of humanity radiating out from the speaker's podium.

Searchlights, banners, torches, these Nuremberg rallies were getting weirder every year, more like some mad religious ceremony than a party political meeting. He looked round his fellow party chiefs and

reflected, as he always did on these occasions, that they'd all come a very long way since the old days in Munich.

Meetings in shabby beer halls, making speeches to a handful of loyal supporters, wondering if you'd sold enough tickets to pay for the rent of the hall. Battles with tough Communist workers, eager to bash in your skull with their beer mugs. They used to buy lots of rounds of drinks and stock-pile the mugs under the tables, ready to use as missiles when the speeches started. It was a rare meeting that didn't end in bloodshed and broken glass.

With some surprise, Goering realized how much he actually missed the bad old days, the booze-ups and the punch-ups. It was tiring being a god. Or rather a demi-god; there was only one god in the Party. None of his colleagues seemed to mind their elevation. They enjoyed being worshipped.

Goering looked round the podium with genial contempt. There was would-be suave von Ribbentrop, ratty little Goebbels, Bormann the king of the filing-cabinets. And there, in the background as always, little Heini . . .

Goering's smile faded as he contemplated his only serious rival in the Nazi hierarchy. A weedy little fellow with rimless glasses and a straggly moustache who looked like an unsuccessful clerk. Heinrich Himmler, Reichsfuehrer SS, head of the dreaded Gestapo and the most feared man in Germany.

Then there's me, thought Goering. What am I doing here? Born a gentleman, which is more than the rest of them can say, a diplomat's son, a war hero, commander of the famous von Richthofen squadron. He thought of his magnificent country estate at Karinhall, his collection, largely looted, of art treasures, and smiled cynically. You're doing very nicely, Hermann, he thought - just like the rest of them.

Above all, always above all, there was the Fuehrer himself, Adolf Hitler, getting up now to pay his ritual tribute to the Party's glorious dead. We are all rising in the tail of the Hitler rocket, thought Goering. Onwards and upwards, higher and higher.

Recently he'd started to wonder how much longer it could go on. Vibrating with energy, charged as always with the adoration of the enormous crowd, Adolf Hitler walked slowly down the steps of the podium.

Inside his mind a trapped alien force writhed helplessly, sensing the

vast whirlpool of psychic energy in the adoring crowd but unable to feed upon it.

She must be free, free to manipulate these human pawns to her own terrible purpose.

But she was trapped. It was all she could do to survive, to conserve her sanity.

The Fuehrer's steps faltered for a moment as he was shaken by the struggle deep inside his brain. He recovered himself and moved on.

Not far away, Ace and the Doctor were onlookers at the same scene. They were on top of a mound, just outside a vast circle of brilliant light. The mound stood at the edge of an enormous plain, packed with thousands and thousands of people. Although it was night, the plain was brilliantly lit, far more brightly than if it had been day. It was surrounded with searchlights sending columns of light into the air, converging so that a dome of light hovered over the central area. There were blazing torches everywhere, and thousands of flagpoles bearing Nazi banners. But above all there were people, row upon row, rank upon rank, black and brown uniforms at the centre, civilians crowding round at the edge.

In spite of the size of the crowd there was a deathly silence. A wide avenue divided the enormous crowd, its edges defined by stormtroopers with rifles and fixed bayonets. Down it a single uniformed figure marched towards an altar bearing an enormous wreath.

Braziers burned round the altar, and their smoke swirled round the solitary figure. For a moment it stood motionless, then its hand rose in a stiff, almost mechanical salute. A deep throated roar burst from the crowd, as if it came from a single giant voice. "Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil!"

It seemed to shake the ground on which they stood. For a moment the figure held the salute, then it turned and strode back down the central avenue, ignoring the hysterical cheering of the crowd.

As the solitary figure came level with the mound, Ace saw the face of the shabby trenchcoated man who'd crawled towards them in agony along the narrow street. He was older and heavier now. The white face was puffier, the ridiculous moustache a little thicker. Only the eyes, still the same intense blue, hadn't changed. They seemed brighter than ever, blazing with an unearthly light.

"It's him!" whispered Ace.

"That's right," said the Doctor. "Adolf Hitler in person. The lad's done well, hasn't he?"

At the end of the long alley a uniformed entourage formed round Hitler, and the group disappeared from sight. Somewhere close by cannons roared, church bells rang, a fanfare of trumpets rang out, and the crowd cheered and cheered and cheered.

"You have to admit it," said the Doctor. "That's real show business."

Ace was amazed to realize how shaken, how moved she felt. "What was it all about?"

"The Fuehrer was paying tribute to the Nazi Party's glorious dead, I expect," said the Doctor. "The reason doesn't matter, it's the event itself that counts. It's a primitive blood-rite, a mixture of religion, politics, and a three-ring circus. Effective, isn't it?"

"I suppose so - in a nasty kind of way."

"It's orchestrated," said the Doctor. "Arranged, preplanned - by someone with a very sophisticated knowledge of the psycho-dynamics of crowds.

Knowledge that doesn't really belong in this century."

"He's being helped?"

"I'm sure of it. There was someone there at the beginning, remember, the one who shot at me. I think somebody, probably a group of somebodies, has been with him ever since, guiding him, nurturing his career, boosting his powers. Did you see his eyes? I think he's controlled, possessed."

"By the Timewyrm?"

The Doctor shook his head. "I keep telling you, it doesn't feel like her, somehow. You've seen her at work, she's about as subtle as your nitro-nine-a. This sort of devious, long-term temporal manipulation is a very different matter."

Ace looked round the vast floodlit arena. "Where are we? And when, come to that?"

The Doctor considered. "I'd say, oh, about fifteen or sixteen years after

that business in Munich. Our Adolf s right on top, as you can see, but I don't think the war's started yet, not with all these lights... I think we must be at Nuremberg, one of the big party rallies. They keep it up for days you know, parades, war games, torchlight processions. Plenty of marching about and yelling stops people thinking. And speeches of course, endless speeches. I imagine we're due for one now. Come on!"

The crowd was streaming out of the vast enclosure and the Doctor moved to join them.

"Hang on," said Ace. "What about the TARDIS?"

"Good point!" The Doctor produced something that looked like a keyring, and touched a concealed control. The TARDIS faded away, the noise of its departure drowned in the general din.

Ace looked alarmed. "Hey, where's it gone?"

"It's parked in the space-time continuum."

"Well, don't lose that gadget. This may be a great place to visit but I don't want to live here."

The simple process of following the crowd led them out of the vast arena, through the streets of a picturesque old town, and up to the steps of an enormous, brightly lit hall, draped, like almost every other building in the town, with enormous swastika banners. The Doctor marched confidently up the steps, Ace close behind him. Through the open doors they could see that the vast hall was already jam-packed.

"Let's try the upper circle," said the Doctor, and headed for a marble staircase. A black-uniformed young SS captain barred their way.

"The upper levels are reserved for party officials."

The Doctor stared at him. Then he took out his monocle, screwed it in his eye, and stared even harder. "Do you know who I am?" he whispered. "Are you aware that I am here at the personal invitation of the Fuehrer?"

The Captain blenched. "Your pardon, Herr . . . ?"

"My name, like my visit, is confidential. You may address me as Herr Doktor. Kindly show me to my box."

"At once, Herr Doktor." The SS Captain led them up the stairs,

brushing other guests out of the way. At the top of the steps he halted. "If the Herr Doktor would be kind enough to tell me which box?"

The Doctor gave him another stare "The best, of course." The officer led them along a curved, red-carpeted corridor and opened the door of a box -

which was occupied by a plump little man in a dark suit and an opulent blonde in an evening gown.

"This box is taken," said the SS Captain. "Out!" All the lights went out. Then one spotlight came on again, focused on the gleaming steel speaker's podium. Another long pause. Then Adolf Hitler mounted the podium. He stood motionless, gazing out over the audience, the blue eyes fixed on some distant horizon. He stood silent for an amazingly long time.

Suddenly he began speaking in a low, tenor voice. "People of Germany..."

The speech, like the voice, was low-key, rambling, vague. But gradually it gathered speed and strength, like a fire fanned by the wind. All at once Hitler was screaming, denouncing the enemies of Germany, the vast, shadowy, international conspiracy of Jews and Bolsheviks and foreigners and subhumans who wanted to destroy the country's greatness - the greatness that he had restored. He begged, he pleaded, he threatened, playing on the emotions of the audience like a master musician on a familiar instrument.

One final scream of "Deutschland! Deutschland! Deutschland!", fist stabbing the air, the whole body throbbing with power like an electric cable, and the speech was over. The hall exploded with applause. Ace found that she was shaking, tears streaming down her face. In the darkness, she heard the Doctor's voice.

"Psychological rape and murder. That's what a German poet called Hitler's speeches."

"It was like magic," said Ace. "Black magic."

"You saw how he started off, totally unimpressive?" Ace nodded. "If he'd gone on like that, he'd have been booed off the stage at a Brownies meeting."

"Ah, but he didn't, did he? He suddenly kicked into overdrive. And can you remember what he actually said in the speech?"

"Not really. Just a lot of vague warnings about Germany being in danger."

"Who from?"

"I dunno. Jews, Communists, capitalists, foreigners, the Salvation Army, little green men - everybody!"

"Exactly! And can you remember any plans or policies, anything specific he was going to do about all this danger?"

She thought hard. "No. Just a lot of stuff about blood and soil and the sacred spirit of the Aryan race."

"There you are then," said the Doctor. "He rambles on about unknown dangers looming from vague enemies, and makes misty appeals to some hazy spirit of the race. All airy-fairy nonsense. But you saw the effect it had."

Ace nodded. "I even felt it."

"Somehow he's bypassing sense and reason and logic altogether, and broadcasting basic signals on the psychic waveband. Fear, hatred, paranoia... Then togetherness, reassurance, group-feelings. Massive chunks of raw emotion, pumped out with enormous power."

"So, how's it done?"

"I think he's being boosted, used as a transmitter. . . "

The Doctor broke off as the door to their box was flung open. An angry voice shouted, "Hands up! You are under arrest!"

2: REUNION

The cheers died away at last, and the Fuehrer left the podium. Hermann Goering hurried after him. Hitler would be tired and drained as always after his speech, and he would need the reassurance of his most faithful supporter at his side. Goebbels and Ribbentrop would be sucking up to him as usual, but they could be discounted. Himmler was the one to worry about, thought Goering grimly. His influence was growing in a very worrying fashion. Recently Hitler had taken to referring to him as his faithful Heinrich...

Making ruthless use of his bulk and his authority, Goering barged his way through the crowd to the entrance and his waiting limousine.

At the magnificent reception in the Deutscher Hof, the Fuehrer's favourite old hotel, Goering was first at Hitler's side. "A magnificent speech, my Fuehrer," he said solemnly. "As always, you show us the way forward. We are nothing without you."

Himmler bustled in to pay his own grovelling tribute, but after that it could only be second best. Party officials and high-ranking officers gathered round to add to the ritual chorus of praise, and Goering, looking on with cynical amusement, signalled a waiter for more champagne. An SS officer came into the room and whispered in Himmler's ear. Himmler scowled, asked questions, then followed the messenger reluctantly from the room.

Curious, Goering strolled after them.

In the anteroom he found a small dark man and a pretty round-faced girl, under the guard of a nervous SS Captain and a couple of stormtroopers.

"The gentleman claimed to be a guest of the Fuehrer," the young officer was saying. "Upon his orders, I ejected Herr Essler of the Nuremburg Party Committee from his box." He gulped unhappily. "Later however, at Herr Essler's insistence, I checked the guest lists and found no mention of any such visitor. As the gentleman insists he is the Fuehrer's guest, I thought it best to refer the matter to the highest level."

Coldly Himmler surveyed the two prisoners. "The story is absurd. I would have been informed. They are undoubtedly terrorist assassins. Take them to Gestapo HQ, and execute them as soon as they have confessed."

The Captain turned to give the order but before he could speak Goering intervened. "Not so fast, Heinrich," he boomed. "Plenty of

time to shoot them later. Let's have a look at them."

He loomed menacingly over the male prisoner. "So you claim to be an old friend of the Fuehrer, eh?"

The man inclined his head. "We met in Munich - in 1923."

"I don't recall seeing you."

"Yet I saw you. I trust the wound left no ill-effects?"

Goering laughed and slapped his belly. "Oh, I survived as you can see. The doctors' drugs harmed me more than the wound! They pumped so much morphine into me they damn near turned me into a drug addict." He turned to Himmler. "I think we'd better check this man's story. You know how the Fuehrer treasures anyone from the old days - his "old fighters" he calls them."

"I tell you I would have been informed," hissed Himmler furiously.

Goering chuckled. "Oh, I don't think the Fuehrer tells you absolutely everything, Heinrich."

Suddenly there was a bustle of movement from the main room. Goering and Himmler leapt smartly aside and Adolf Hitler himself came through the doorway. He seemed tired, drained, as if the speech had exhausted him.

He looked curiously at the little group by the door. "What is this?"

"Nothing -" began Himmler.

The booming voice of Goering overrode him. "Mein Fuehrer, this gentleman claims an acquaintance - from the old days in Munich."

Hitler's eyes flicked incuriously over the Doctor. "I have no recollection."

Suddenly the man stepped forward to confront him, piercing grey eyes locking with Hitler's bright blue. In some strange way, thought Goering, it was a meeting of equals.

The prisoner's voice was urgent and compelling. "Look more closely.

Remember a time when you were in pain, in danger and in despair.

Remember someone who eased the pain, took you to safety. I told you

that one day you would rule Germany - and that we should meet again!"

Hitler stared hard at him for a moment. Then he stepped forward and folded the stranger in a formal embrace.

A gasp of astonishment went through the room. Hitler stepped back, looking delightedly at the newcomer. "You have returned, Doctor, just as you said you would."

"And now you rule Germany," said the Doctor. "Just as I said you would."

Hitler looked round the room, a hand on the Doctor's shoulder. "This man gave me help in my darkest hour. More than that, he gave me hope. He believed in my success."

There was a polite murmur of astonishment and applause.

"It was not a matter of belief," said the Doctor calmly. "I knew that you would rule. Just as I know now that you have many troubles, many enemies. That is why I have returned."

Hitler regarded him intently. "We shall talk again, very soon." He turned to the officers in his entourage. "The Doctor and his companion are the honoured guests of the Reich. Let suitable accommodation be found for them, here at the Deutscher Hof. Tomorrow they return with me to Berlin."

As Hitler swept out of the room, Ace turned to the Doctor and whispered,

"Congratulations, Professor, you've done it again!"

"Listen," hissed the Doctor. "I'm a wandering scientist and scholar and you're my niece. Be as enigmatic as possible and give the impression that I'm a strange and mysterious character with a number of mystic powers."

"Just stick to the truth, you mean?"

Before the Doctor could reply, the crowd descended upon them. Goering claimed them as his property, sweeping them into the luxurious inner reception room, an impressive chandelier-lit chamber, where groups of high-ranking officers, party officials and local dignitaries, and their female companions, sipped champagne and

munched elaborate canap,s. The story of what had happened was sweeping the room and everyone was looking, openly or furtively, at Ace and the Doctor as they entered. They had been touched by greatness and everybody wanted to be their friend.

Summoning waiters to serve them, Goering looked at the Doctor with frank curiosity. "You're something of a phenomenon, my friend. I've never seen the Fuehrer give anyone a welcome like that! What did you do - save his life?"

The Doctor smiled modestly and said nothing.

Goering turned to Himmler, who was hovering awkwardly nearby. "Well, I certainly saved your life, Heinrich - you nearly shot the Fuehrer's dearest friend."

Himmler gave the Doctor a stiff little bow. "I trust you will forgive my initial suspicion. The safety of the Fuehrer is always my first concern."

The Doctor bowed. "It is also mine."

Ace was uncomfortably aware that everyone in the room seemed to be looking at them. "I feel like a film star, Professor!"

The Doctor gave her a what-can-you-do shrug, and was immediately swallowed up by a group of his new-found admirers. Suddenly Ace heard an oily voice in her ear. "Are you interested in a career in the cinema, my dear? With such youth and charm, anything is possible. Perhaps I could be of assistance."

She turned and saw a dark, ratty-looking little man at her elbow. He smiled ingratiatingly and put a hand on her arm. "Allow me to introduce myself.

Joseph Goebbels, Minister of Propaganda. The cinema, like all aspects of Reich culture, is among my responsibilities."

Ace snatched her arm away. "Really?" she said in a bored voice.

Goebbels was undeterred. "Shall we discuss the matter somewhere a little less crowded - my suite, perhaps?"

Ace considered giving him a swift clip round the ear but decided it would be tactless. "I don't think so," she said sweetly. "I'm not really thinking of becoming a film star, that was just a silly joke. My real interests are science and archeology. My uncle and I have just been

making a study of the inscriptions on the pyramids, you know. It's a fascinating subject..."

Goebbels hated intelligent women. He murmured a few smarmy civilities and melted away.

Someone called von Ribbentrop turned up next. "I'm Foreign Minister at the moment," he told her pompously. "Such a great responsibility. But my happiest time was as Ambassador to England. Are you familiar with the Court of St James?"

"Not really," said Ace. "Have you ever been to Perivale?"

Goering meanwhile was keeping a keen eye on this mysterious Doctor. He noticed that the newcomer was continually looking around the room. "Can I assist you, Herr Doktor? I know most people here."

"That man over there - the tall, white-bearded fellow with the cloak and the stick."

"Ah, Doctor Kriegslieter," said Goering instantly. "Do you know him?"

"I'm not sure. He seems familiar, somehow."

Goering was interested in Kriegslieter himself, and suspicious of him too.

"It's unusual for him to be here. He seldom attends social functions. His health's not good, crippled from birth, poor fellow."

"Who is he exactly?"

Goering shrugged massive shoulders. "Some kind of mystic philosopher.

The Fuehrer's very taken with him, insists on having him on the platform for all his main speeches. Look, he's coming over."

As if aware of the Doctor's regard, Kriegslieter was limping towards them.

The nearer he got, the stranger he appeared. It was clear that the body beneath the all-enveloping cloak was tragically deformed. He moved surprisingly quickly with an odd, spidery gait - as if there might be eight legs rather than two under his cloak. His head was enormously large and oddly shaped, though the shock of white hair and the bushy white beard helped to disguise the fact.

He bowed when he reached the Doctor. "I hope I do not intrude?" His voice was rich and deep. "I felt I had to permit myself a word with our mystery guest. I am Doctor Kriegslieter."

The Doctor bowed in return. "And I am the Doctor."

"Ah, you are here incognito?"

"I very much hope so."

"And you are a Doctor of?"

"Practically everything," said the Doctor modestly. "And you?"

"My field is the esoteric, the unknown. The Fuehrer is very interested in such things - but then, of course you know him well."

"We met, quite briefly, many years ago," said the Doctor. "I shall be very interested to see in what directions his tastes have developed."

"From the warmth of the Fuehrer's greeting, I thought you must be old friends."

"I was able to be of service to him," said the Doctor. "I hope I may be so in the future."

"We must all serve the Fuehrer, in our different ways," said Kriegslieter.

"Herr Doktor, I am sure we shall meet again." The words sounded curiously like a threat.

"It's very strange," said the Doctor. "I keep getting an odd feeling that we've met before."

"I'm afraid your appearance is quite unfamiliar to me, Doctor," said Kriegslieter. He smiled wryly. "And I'm sure you would have remembered mine."

"I wasn't talking about appearances," said the Doctor.

"Perhaps in some other life, then. Do you believe in reincarnation, Doctor?"

Kriegslieter bowed again and limped quickly away.

Goering had been watching these exchanges with intense curiosity.

"What do you make of him?"

"I'm not sure:

"Our Fuehrer takes up with such people from time to time, but he usually tires of them. This Kriegslieter has lasted longer than most. Perhaps it's time for a change?"

"Perhaps it is."

"Of course, if the Fuehrer had an adviser of sense and discretion, a man one could talk to, a practical man," said Goering meaningfully. "Have you ever been in the service of the State, Doctor?"

"I suppose I did once hold a semi-official position," said the Doctor. "I was unpaid scientific adviser to a Government security organization."

"In Germany?"

"No, in England:

"So much the better, the Fuehrer has great admiration for the English.

Another Aryan race, you know. And in Berlin, such an appointment would certainly not be unpaid. In such a post, a man could do great service to the Reich - and to himself. He could have almost anything he wanted."

"Indeed?" said the Doctor. "Fortunately my wants are few."

"Everybody wants something, Doctor," said Goering jovially. "You must come and visit me at Karinhall. Are you fond of hunting?"

As soon as he could the Doctor pleaded tiredness, and he and Ace were shown to a luxurious two-bedroomed suite, extremely modern in spite of the age of the hotel.

"The Fuehrer always stays here at the Deutscher Hof when he comes to Nuremberg," said the chambermaid proudly. "Of course we had to have the whole place rebuilt to suit him."

When they were alone, Ace looked at the Doctor. "Do we have to go and sit in the bathroom again?"

The Doctor shook his head. "I brought this from the TARDIS."

He produced an old-fashioned pocket watch, opened the back to

reveal complex electronic circuitry and a tiny flashing blue light, shut it and put it back in his pocket. "High-frequency sonic pulse. They're not catching me out again – I am now unbuggable!"

Ace yawned. "Good for you, Professor. You were a great social success tonight:

"Only because I got hugged by Hitler," said the Doctor with a grimace.

"Everyone was trying to get in with me, to gain the ear of the Fuehrer's favourite. Goering seemed to be offering me some kind of job." He frowned.

"I wonder what he's up to. You know, I got the impression he was badly worried. Worried about Hitler."

Ace was looking thoughtfully at him. "You like it, don't you, Professor?" she said suddenly. "All the lying and cheating and treachery. You even enjoy it."

The Doctor smiled wryly. "Perhaps I do, in a way. You have to remember, I grew up in a society so complex, devious and corrupt it makes this lot look like a kindergarten:

"What, you? A Time Lord? I should have thought it was all sweetness and light and high tea in the nursery."

The Doctor shook his head. "When it comes to low cunning and high treason, the Nazis have got nothing on the Time Lords of Gallifrey." He stretched out in an armchair, hands clasped behind his head. "Quite a successful evening on the whole. While I'm in the Fuehrer's favour I'll be at the centre of things, a good place to look around."

"Look around for what?"

"For whoever's controlling the Fuehrer, for a start."

"Any suspects?"

"I met a man called Kriegslieter tonight. The man we saw on the platform."

"I saw you talking to him. He looked really strange."

"He was," said the Doctor. "Strange - and strangely familiar."

As the reception drew to its close, Goering found himself taken aside

by Himmler.

I wonder what little Heini wants, thought Goering. He took another swig of champagne. Himmler, who was sipping orange juice as usual, gave him a reproving look.

"This Doctor," he began. "What do you make of him?"

"I'm not sure. What do you think?"

"It is strange," said Himmler. "It is very strange - that anyone could be so close to the Fuehrer, and I not know him."

"I liked him," said Goering. "Quite a formidable personality in a quiet way.

Not very impressive to look at - but still, looks aren't everything, eh Heinrich?"

To Goering's vast amusement, Himmler flushed angrily. He was acutely aware of the contrast between his own pot-bellied, short-sighted figure and the blond young giants on the SS recruiting posters.

"I am not in favour of any new entrant to the Fuehrer's circle at the moment." said Himmler meaningfully. "While this problem continues. . ."

Goering nodded. "We can't conceal it for ever, you know. Suppose it happens in public - while he's making a speech?"

"According to Doctor Kriegslieter, the Fuehrer is most vulnerable after a speech, when he is exhausted and his defences are low."

"But the attacks are getting more frequent?"

"Doctor Kriegslieter is confident that they can be controlled, perhaps by the use of hypnotism, if only the Fuehrer will consent."

"He won't," said Goering definitely. "You set great store by this Kriegslieter, don't you?"

"Doctor Kriegslieter is an extremely brilliant man. The work of his Aryan Research Bureau is proving immensely valuable to the SS and to the Reich."

Goering laughed. "It's time you realized the SS is a private army of hired killers - not a mystic order of soldier monks. I've heard what you

get up to in that castle of yours. Secret altars, SS chapels.. ."

"National Socialism is a matter of the spirit, not just of the flesh," said Himmler angrily.

"Tell you what, Heinrich, you provide the spirit and I'll provide the flesh!"

Goering's great belly shook as he hooted with laughter. "Meanwhile, what are we going to do about this mysterious Doctor?"

Himmler shrugged. "If the Fuehrer is determined to befriend him there is little we can do - expect watch him, of course."

"Of course," said Goering mockingly. "But then, you watch everyone - don't you, Heinrich?"

Himmler glared angrily at him, but made no reply.

Goering smiled to himself at the irony of it all. They hated and feared each other, and they were deadly rivals for high office in the Reich, and for the favour of the Fuehrer. However, for the moment they were allies.

They knew, both of them that the continued success of the Reich, their careers, their fortunes, their very lives, depended on one man - Adolf Hitler.

The Fuehrer.

And the Fuehrer was going mad.

3: THE POSSESSED

Later that same night, a small, thickset, bull-necked little man was hurrying along the corridors of the Deutscher Hof hotel. He paused outside a bedroom door and tapped discreetly. "Herr Doktor?"

A voice called, "Come!"

Since it was now three in the morning, the visitor was surprised to find the Doctor wide awake and fully dressed. He was sitting in an armchair, beneath the circle of light cast by a tall standard lamp. "Yes?"

"I must apologize for disturbing you at this late hour, Herr Doktor. My name is Bormann, Martin Bormann. I have the honour to be Secretary to the Fuehrer."

The Doctor bowed his head but said nothing.

"The Fuehrer -" began Bormann.

" - wishes to see me," concluded the Doctor. "As you see I am ready and waiting."

Martin Bormann gave the Doctor a look of awe. How could he possibly have known? "If you will come with me, Herr Doktor?"

Bormann led the Doctor along silent corridors, then through a door guarded by SS sentries and into a huge shadowy room. It was dominated by an enormous desk on which burned a single reading-lamp. Behind the desk sat Adolf Hitler, signing papers one after the other in a quick nervous scrawl.

As Bormann showed the Doctor in, Hitler signed the last one on the pile, pushing it aside with a sigh of relief. Bormann hurried forward to take the papers away.

"Ah, my good Bormann," said Hitler. He looked up at the Doctor. "With Bormann I can work through a pile of dossiers in ten minutes that would take me hours with anyone else." He rose, and put a hand on Barman's shoulder. "If I say to him, "Remind me of something in six months" time," I can be absolutely certain he will do it."

Bormann glowed with quiet pride. Such moments of praise justified

his whole existence. "I shall be at hand if you need me, my Fuehrer." He bowed and withdrew with his piles of papers.

Hitler walked to one of a pair of armchairs by the window, waving the Doctor to another. He stared out of the window for a moment. The remnants of the torchlight procession winding, through the streets of Nuremberg were still visible.

Do these people ever get tired of worshipping their Fuehrer? thought the Doctor. And does he ever get tired of being worshipped? In the glow of the lamp, Hitler's face looked haggard, even haunted. After a long silence, he spoke in a low, hesitant voice. "When we met in Munich, in my darkest hour, you told me that the day would come, when I should rule Germany.

Tonight, you said that even then you knew. . . " The Doctor bowed his head.

"How did you know?" asked Hitler hoarsely.

The Doctor paused, wondering what to say. Even in talking to Hitler he was interfering in history. As always, it was a dangerous thing to do. The results of that interference could spread like the ripples from a stone thrown into a pond. The end result could be catastrophic. Yet, if he didn't interfere, how could he prevent that perversion of history that had resulted in a Nazi-occupied Britain? Instinct told him to speak only the truth. "I have travelled greatly over the years, both in space and in time. That is how I knew, even then, that your name would loom large in history."

Hitler seized on the essential point, and interpreted it in his own way.

"Travel in time? Ah, in the mind, in visions. You are a mystic, like the good Doctor Kriegslieter." He leaned forward, blue eyes blazing. "And now, here and now, Doctor, can you still see what is to come? Can you tell me my fate sixteen years hence, as you did sixteen years ago?" Sixteen years?

thought the Doctor. You've barely got six, you poor deluded madman. Six years and you'll be dead, by your own hand. Your Thousand Year Reich will be in ruins, and most of your henchmen on trial for their lives, here in Nuremberg. That's your Nazi destiny, Adolf Hitler, and I'm going to make sure you fulfil it. Because otherwise... Otherwise this evil regime will spread over all the world -perhaps, in time, throughout the cosmos - a monstrous perversion of true history.

Hitler's voice interrupted his thoughts. "Well, Doctor? Can you see what is to come?"

The truth, but not the whole truth, thought the Doctor. Aloud he said, "Some things. No one sees everything."

Hitler rose and began pacing restlessly up and down. "Six years ago I seized supreme power, and since then, what I wanted I have taken.

Austria, the Sudetenland, Czechoslovakia - all these are but steps in my master plan. Next comes Poland, then Russia, then Persia and India, the original homes of the Aryan race." Hitler's movements grew faster and more jerky and his voice began rising with his excitement. He saw the Doctor's calm grey eyes regarding him, and made an effort to regain control.

"As I said, the next step is Poland. For this reason alone, I have made a treaty of friendship with the Bolshevik scum in Russia."

The Doctor nodded. "With secret clauses, dividing Poland between you –

making sure the Russians won't interfere."

Hitler swung round in amazement. "How could you possibly know that?"

The Doctor held up his hand. "As I told you, some things I can see."

"Then tell me this. The British have guaranteed to help Poland if I attack.

But I am sure they will not honour their word. I am right, am I not?"

"No," said the Doctor. "You are wrong."

Adolf Hitler went rigid with shock. "What did you say?" That's done it, thought the Doctor. Probably nobody's told him he's wrong for the last six years.

Angrily Hitler bore down on the Doctor. "How dare you say this, to me! Do you realize that you are addressing the supreme ruler of Germany? I can have you shot!"

The Doctor sat calmly in his chair, unmoving and unmoved. "If you only want the advice of people who will agree with every word you say - this hotel is full of them. Simply snap your fingers. I can only tell

you what I know. As soon as you invade Poland, the British will declare war."

With a mighty effort, Hitler controlled his anger. "Very well, then tell me this. If I attack Poland, will the Russians keep their part of the bargain?"

"As long as you keep yours."

"And if I fight the British and their allies will I defeat them?"

The Doctor was thinking furiously. Once again it was a time for truth - up to a point. "Your armies will sweep through Europe in a lightning war - France, Belgium, Holland. . .

"And England?" whispered Hitler hoarsely. "What of England?"

"That I cannot tell you."

Once more Hitler was striding up and down. "Then 'I' will tell you!" he screamed. "If the English resist me I shall destroy them. Anyone who resists me will be destroyed. I shall annihilate them all! Poland, Russia, India, Asia! All will be ground under my heel. I shall be supreme ruler of all the world."

The Doctor sat quite still in his chair. Something very odd was happening.

As Hitler strode ranting to and fro power was emanating from him in waves.

It wasn't just the power of the orator, the power the Doctor had felt at the rally, though that had been strong enough.

This was something different, a fiercer, wilder power. It was physical power, too. The air was filled with a rushing wind, curtains billowed, ornaments flew through the air and smashed against the wall.

"I shall destroy this planet," screamed Hitler in a voice that was nothing like his own. "I shall bring down destruction on every planet in the galaxy."

He picked up his massive desk and hurled it against the wall, smashing the heavy piece of furniture to fragments.

"I shall destroy the universe!"

The Doctor did a nimble backwards somersault and took shelter behind his own overturned armchair. Cautiously he peered over the side. Hitler was rampaging round the room, smashing aside anything in his path, and bellowing ever louder threats of cosmic doom. Behind him the energy-storm swept through the room like a wind, hurling paintings, ornaments, books and papers through the air.

Suddenly he seemed to become aware of the Doctor.

He stalked towards him, his eyes glowing with fiery madness. "I knew we should meet again, Doctor! Only this time you do not have your TARDIS to protect you. This time i shall destroy you!" Hitler's hand flashed out and a bolt of psychic energy shattered into matchwood the armchair behind which the Doctor had been hiding. The Doctor, however, had rolled aside. He sprang to his feet, poised, looking for more shelter.

There was none.

Hitler, who seemed taller now, with a strange silvery glow around him, stalked towards the Doctor, claw-like hands outstretched, as if to rend him limb from limb. The Doctor backed away.

A last minute dash for the door - if he could make it, but he didn't fancy his chances. Suddenly Hitler gave one last terrible howl, his body arched, and he dropped limply to the ground.

Psychic overload, thought the Doctor. Suppose he's dead?

Outside the door, Martin Bormann had been listening in mounting anguish.

The sequence of events he had learned to fear was beginning again. The Fuehrer's voice raised in anger, the inhuman screams, the terrible sounds of destruction. The final howl and the thud of the falling body were just too much for him. Dreading what he would find he ran into the room, revolver in hand. The man called the Doctor was kneeling beside the Fuehrer's body.

Bormann raised his revolver. "Get away from him!"

"Put that away, you fool," snapped the Doctor. "The Fuehrer has had an attack of nervous hysteria. A brain storm."

There was such authority in his voice that Bormann automatically holstered his revolver. "Should I send for a doctor?"

"I am a doctor." The Doctor was examining the unconscious Hitler. "Has anything like this happened before?"

"Yes, several times."

"When, at what times?"

"Always late at night, when he is tired and alone."

"What happens?"

"No one knows. We hear terrible screaming and find him like this."

"Is the room always wrecked?"

"Always. Destruction such as you would not believe."

"Has there ever been anyone with him before?"

Martin Bormann lifted Hitler carefully on to the massive sofa. "Only once. It was at the time of the Czechoslovakian crisis. The Fuehrer was seeing someone from the General Staff late at night."

"What happened?"

"The man must have angered the Fuehrer, and I heard the Fuehrer begin to shout. Then I heard a terrible scream. When I ran in the room was wrecked, the man was dead and the Fuehrer was as he is now."

"How did the man die?"

"The diagnosis was heart failure."

"And what was he like, the man who died?"

Bormann gaped at him.

"Old, young, fat, thin?" snapped the Doctor.

"In his sixties, rather fat. A senior Staff Officer, a General."

"I imagine the diagnosis was accurate," murmured the Doctor. "The shock of seeing what I've just seen. . . "

Bormann loosened Hitler's collar. "The strange thing is, the attacks never come when he is with me - and we are frequently working together late at night, like this."

"That isn't difficult to explain. You seem to have a calming effect on the Fuehrer. In my opinion he will be most vulnerable to the attacks when he is excited or enraged - especially if he is already tired. I saw for myself tonight. We were discussing his plans, he became angry, not at me but at the English - and this followed."

"Yet you survived it, you calmed him?"

"I did what I could," said the Doctor gravely.

"Can you help him, Doctor?" asked Bormann eagerly. "He thinks highly of you, I know, he was speaking of you earlier."

"I will do what I can," said the Doctor solemnly. "But I shall need your help."

"Anything," said Martin Bormann fervently. "Anything at all. Anyone who can help the Fuehrer through this crisis commands my total loyalty."

The Doctor looked down at the sleeping Hitler. "Does he remember anything afterwards?"

"I don't think so. He never refers to what has happened."

"Get him to bed," said the Doctor. "Get this place cleaned up, and, above all, see no one talks."

"No one will talk," said Martin Bormann grimly. "Tomorrow it will be as if this had never happened."

Until the next time, thought the Doctor. He looked sternly at Bormann.

"Above all, encourage him to remain calm, to avoid stress. . . "

And that's a fine piece of advice for someone who's just about to start World War II, thought the Doctor as he made his way back to his suite.

Inside he found Ace striding agitatedly up and down. Wrapped in a handsome silk dressing gown, property of the hotel, she looked quite different.

She really is turning into quite a handsome young woman, thought the Doctor. Could be a problem for someone someday.

She still sounded like the same old Ace though. "Where have you been, Professor?" she yelled.

Oh well, thought the Doctor, even Professor Higgins had his problems. He looked at Ace and said, "The rain in Spain. . ."

Ace didn't want to know about the rain in Spain.

"Some sort of ruckus woke me up and I came to your room to look for you, and there you were gone, and the bed not slept in. I thought that horrible Himmler had changed his mind and come and nicked you after all."

"Don't be silly," said the Doctor. "If he'd done that, he'd have nicked you as well."

"So what's been happening?" demanded Ace.

The Doctor told her.

When he'd finished, Ace said, "Sounds like he threw a major wobbly."

"What my old nurse used to call a really nasty turn," agreed the Doctor.

"But it was more sinister than that."

"How?"

"Well, there were the paranormal effects for a start, flying flowerpots, all that kind of thing."

"Don't you get that sort of stuff happening around disturbed adolescents in a tantrum?" suggested Ace. "Maybe old Adolph's just a retarded teenager."

"Hitler as poltergeist," murmured the Doctor. "It's an intriguing theory. But what about all those things he was shouting?"

"Basic paranoid stuff, surely?"

"Cosmic paranoid stuff," corrected the Doctor. "Hitler might fantasize about destroying a city or even a country, but whole planets? Galaxies? The universe? Outside his range, surely? And there's something else."

"What?"

The Doctor hesitated. "I never got round to telling you, Ace, but I had a rather similar experience in the false 1951, when I was looking up history changes in the archives."

"Proves my point, Professor! You're a retarded teenager too."

The Doctor said sternly, "Who do we know who's raving mad, racketing through space and time, and obsessed with causing trouble?"

"Apart from you, you mean?"

"Ace!"

"All right, all right, the Timewyrm. But if it is her, why aren't we seeing more of her - not that I want to, mind you," she added hastily. "But why isn't she attacking us, or destroying the world or something? Why all this "now you see me, now you don't" stuff?"

"I'm beginning to suspect, Ace, that she isn't in control. I think she may be in some cyclic-recurrent phase system at present. If so it won't last, it can't be stable. Either she'll get a better grip on things and have a real go at us, or she'll fly off in fragments all over the void. The latter, I hope."

"So what you're saying, Professor," said Ace, "is that the Timewyrm's racketing round the cosmos like an out-of-control tube train on the Circle line. She gives us a buzz when she zips through our station, then she's off again till the next time?"

"Well, as an explanation of a highly complex psycho-kinetic-spatio-temporal phenomenon, it's a bit on the simplistic side - but, roughly speaking, yes."

"So what do we do?"

"Well, I still think it isn't just the Timewyrm we're dealing with - so we learn as much as we can about what's going on here. This is the point where history must have changed, remember."

"And keep our heads down next time the Timewyrm comes round?"

"Exactly!"

"Well, as a plan for tackling a highly complex psycho-kinetic-spatio-temporal phenomenon it sounds a bit simplistic to me," said Ace sleepily,

"but I suppose it'll have to do. I'm going back to bed."

4: HITLER'S GUESTS

MEMO TOP SECRET

...and the increasing instability of the Subject is endangering the success of the Project. I myself was always of the opinion that the sources of his immensely powerful psychic energy levels should have been more closely investigated before final selection. Since his power sources are beyond our knowledge, their imminent breakdown, if that is indeed what is happening may be beyond our ability to control. It is vital that the Subject's condition is constantly monitored. I further recommend that arrangements be put in train for his removal and replacement if necessary. In my view the most suitable candidate for an alternative Subject...

Martin Bormann was having a busy morning. There was always a great deal to be done at the end of a Nuremberg rally. The party officials had to be ferried back to Berlin, the VIPs amongst them on the special Fuehrer train. Bookings to be made, bills to be paid, limousines to be ordered, local Party officials to be thanked . . .

This year there had been extra problems. A team of workmen to repair and redecorate the Fuehrer's suite, at top speed and in total secrecy. And two entirely unexpected guests as well, the mysterious Herr Doktor and his niece, if that was what she was. Accommodation on the Fuehrer's train, a suite in a first-class Berlin hotel...

Not that Bormann begrudged the effort, not at all. He prided himself on his ability to cope with emergencies, and difficulties melted away at the mention of the Fuehrer's name. If the Herr Doktor could be of help to the Fuehrer, no effort was too great. As the Fuehrer's train pulled out of Nuremberg station, Martin Bormann was tucked into a cubbyhole office in the guard's van, clipboard in hand, checking and re-checking that nothing had been forgotten. His mind went back to the two unexpected visitors.

They'd need passes as well, and expense money. He made a note on his clipboard.

The Doctor and Ace, meanwhile, sat in comfortable armchairs in a private sitting-room, watching the countryside flash by, with deferential SS waiters to bring anything they needed.

"Does himself well, doesn't he, your mate Adolf ?" said Ace.

"This is nothing. You should see Ribbentrop's train, that's much flashier.

And as for Goering's, I gather it's a palace on rails."

"You mean they've all got private trains?"

The Doctor shrugged. "Trains, country houses, jewels, art treasures, clothes, cars -and huge fat bank accounts. They're not in politics for their health, you know."

"What a collection of crooks," said Ace. She took another sip of champagne. "And we're getting just as bad. I'm getting a taste for this stuff.

I'll lose all my street cred if this keeps up."

"Comes of mingling with the mighty," said the Doctor. "You've stumbled on a universal truth, I'm afraid. On any planet, in any galaxy, in any time zone -

the people on top do all right for themselves."

Ace leaned back in her chair. "Well, it's a tough job but someone's got to do it. Ring for some more caviar, would you, Professor?"

Clipboard in hand, Martin Bormann stood on the crowded platform of Berlin station, checking his departure list. The Fuehrer had left, so had Goering, Goebbels, von Ribbentrop and Himmler, whisked away by Mercedes limousines to their various Chancelleries, Ministries and offices. So there only remained... He turned and saw the Herr Doktor and his niece patiently waiting. He hurried towards them. "A thousand apologies, Herr Doktor."

"Not at all," said the Doctor amiably.

"If you will come with me? I will see you to your hotel." He led them to an SS limousine which whisked them from the swastika-draped station, past swastika-draped buildings, and into a swastika-draped luxury hotel, the Hotel Adlon. Here Bormann was greeted with great deference, and under his supervision they were soon comfortably installed in the usual luxury suite. Fishing inside a bulging briefcase, Bormann produced generous amounts of spending money, and identification papers in the name of Doctor Johann and Fraulein Schmidt.

"The papers are valid for Berlin only," he said apologetically. "If you are found elsewhere, you will be arrested. I should advise you to remain in or near the hotel - the Fuehrer wishes the Herr Doktor to remain available for consultation at any time."

"I suppose our wishes don't come into it," said the girl.

"Naturally not," said Bormann approvingly, pleased at her rapid grasp of the situation. "As always, the Fuehrer's will is paramount."

The girl looked strangely at him but made no reply overawed, no doubt, by the Fuehrer's name. Bormann bowed, and took his leave.

"Old Adolf can take his chances as far as I'm concerned," said Ace when Bormann had gone. "I'm not sitting staring at the walls."

"Quite right," said the Doctor. "Let's go and take a look at Berlin - while it's still here."

It was a fine sunny day and soon they were strolling down the tree-lined Unter den Linden. Ace looked round the pleasant summer scene. Young couples were strolling under the trees, off-duty soldiers wandered round enjoying the sunshine and looking for pretty girls. If one ignored the ever-present swastikas and SS stormtroopers, it was a happy, normal scene.

"What did you mean, Professor, back in the hotel - when you said we should see Berlin while it was still here?"

The Doctor stopped by a kiosk and bought a selection of newspapers. He read out the headlines. "Warsaw threatens bombardment, unbelievable agitation of Polish war madness, Poland against peace in Europe." He showed the papers to Ace who flicked rapidly through them. "According to this lot it's Poland's picking the fight!"

The Doctor sighed. "These are Nazi papers, Ace - the only kind there are here now. All this is actually the opposite of the truth. Hitler's determined to invade Poland. Very soon there'll be war. In six years this city will be a heap of rubble."

Ace looked at him in horror. "You've got all this influence with Adolf - can't you stop it?"

Suddenly the Doctor grabbed Ace's arm and pulled her into a shop doorway.

"Hey, what's happening?" she protested.

The Doctor pointed. A squad of SS men was marching down the street, carrying the usual massive swastika banner.

"So there's a parade? So what?"

"Better stay here, Ace, I just don't see you saluting the flag."

Ace realized that as the swastika banner passed by, everyone in the street came to attention. All the men saluted and took off their hats.

All except one.

A burly workman was standing at the kerb. As the banner went by he stood there, hands in pockets, cigarette in mouth, cap on head, ignoring the parade. But the parade didn't ignore him. At a shout from the sergeant in charge, it crashed to a halt. Half a dozen men broke ranks and swarmed over the workman, beating him to the ground in a hail of fists, kicking his body as it lay curled up in the gutter. The squad re-formed and marched on. No one said anything, no one protested, no one even seemed to see.

After a bit the workman got painfully to his feet, spat out what looked like a tooth, wiped the blood from his face with the back of his hand and stumbled away.

"Did you see that, Doctor?" said Ace. "A real thumping, just because he didn't salute their rotten flag."

"He was lucky," said the Doctor.

"Lucky!"

"They could have kicked him to death, or shot him down in the street, and no one would have said a word."

"Oh, come on," protested Ace. "There must be some law and order, even in Nazi Germany."

"Nazi Germany is a criminal state. What's right, what's legal is whatever the Party wants to do - and that means whatever Hitler wants to do."

Ace was silent, still trying to take it in.

"You said something earlier about my stopping the war," said the

Doctor grimly. "It's the war that will destroy this evil regime. My first problem is to make sure the war happens. The second is to make sure they don't win."

He sighed. "Let's try and forget about them for a bit. We'll go and sit in the park."

But even in the park there was no escape.

They were sitting on a bench in the Tiergarten when Ace saw a shabby printed notice on the back. She read it out loud.

"No Jews!" Ace looked at the Doctor in horror. "They're not allowed to sit on park benches?"

"They're not allowed to do a lot of other things," said the Doctor. "Run businesses, practise the professions, have their own money or property.

Most of the real persecution is over by now. The beatings-up, the smashed shop windows, the burning synagogues..."

"You mean they've stopped doing it?"

"Well, yes, I suppose you might say that. But only because there's no one left to do it to. Most of those that didn't leave the country are dead or in prison camps by now. That notice is out of date."

As they walked through the park the Doctor went on, "It's not just the Jews, you know, though they got the worst of it. Gypsies, homosexuals, trade unionists, intellectuals - anyone a bit different, anyone they don't like the look of."

"What happened to them all?"

"Dead, a lot of them, or in concentration camps."

"But the war hasn't even begun yet."

"They've had concentration camps in Germany for six years, ever since the Nazis came to power. Up to now they've been persecuting their own people, fellow Germans. They're just about to start on the rest of the world."

5: DAY OF RECKONING

I am wrongly judged if my love of peace and my patience are mistaken for weakness or even cowardice. I have therefore resolved to speak to Poland in the language Poland uses to us. Last night, for the first time, Polish soldiers fired on our territory. We have been returning the fire. From now on, bombs will be met with bombs!

From Adolf Hitler's speech to the Reichstag on the invasion of Poland.

Two days after Hitler sent his armies into Poland he summoned the Doctor.

It happened just after breakfast. Ace was finishing her coffee while the Doctor read out to her gloomy bits from the papers, which were full, of course, of the news of Hitler's brilliantly successful invasion.

The Doctor looked up. "There's a report of Hitler's speech to the Reichstag here. Apparently he said from now on he's just a simple soldier of Germany, and he won't take off his soldier's coat till the war is won."

"Bully for him," said Ace. "It'll be getting pretty smelly in six years."

It was a fine Sunday morning, and Ace was wondering whether to bother going out. She'd lost her taste for sightseeing.

Somehow the sign on the bench had upset her even more than the brutality they'd seen in the streets. The Doctor's gloomy pronouncements hadn't helped either. Despite the sunshine, Berlin seemed more and more like a city of ghosts. It was all the worse because the ghosts didn't know they were dead yet.

She still hadn't decided what to do when Martin Bormann appeared in the doorway, quiet and deferential as ever. "The Fuehrer wishes to see you at the Chancellery, Herr Doktor. The car is waiting."

Ace jumped up.

"Just the Herr Doktor, Fraulein," said Bormann patronizingly. "These are serious affairs of state - men's affairs."

Ace drew a deep breath. "Now listen, mate.. . "

"Steady on, Ace," said the Doctor hurriedly. "Nazism equals sexism, I'm afraid. Church, kitchen and kids, that's a woman's natural sphere. Isn't that right, Herr Bormann? Sorry, Ace. I'll be back as soon as I can. Better stay in the hotel."

Before she could work up a proper protest, the Doctor bustled the bewildered Martin Bormann out.

If there was one thing Ace hated, it was being left out of things. Nobody wants me -and everyone's telling me what to do, she thought furiously. She was pacing about, trying to decide whether or not to go out just to show them, even though she didn't really want to, when there was a discreet tap at the door. A hotel servant entered with an envelope on a silver tray.

"It is for the Herr Doktor."

"You've just missed him. He's popped down to the Chancellery to give Adolf some advice." Enjoying the man's horrified expression Ace went on,

"Leave it with me; I'll see he gets it as soon as he gets back."

Putting the envelope on the table, the man backed hastily from the room.

Ace picked up the envelope. It was heavy and expensive-looking, the kind, she imagined, that contained high-powered official invitations. It was addressed simply to: The Doctor.

Ace decided to open it. It might be important, in which case she could send it on to the Chancellery. Anyway, she was curious.

Inside the envelope was a plain white card. On it was engraved, Doctor Felix Kriegslieter: Aryan Research Institute.

Underneath was an address in a street called the Kronprinzenstrasse.

Ace turned the card over. On the back was written: I so much enjoyed our recent meeting. We have much to discuss. Do please call.

Like any good tourist, Ace had bought a city map. She consulted it and discovered that Kronprinzenstrasse was just off the Kurfurstendamm, the long straight boulevard that ran through the heart of Berlin. And Kriegslieter was the strange-looking man the Doctor had noticed at the Nuremberg Rally, the man he'd been so fascinated by at the reception afterwards. Now Kriegslieter wanted to see the Doctor. It could well be important - and the Doctor might be tied up at the Chancellery all day.

Ace decided it was her duty to go in his place. She could explain that

the Professor was tied up with old Adolf, make an appointment for some future occasion, and, at the same time, suss the bloke out. It would be great if she could hand the Professor some useful info when he got back. At least she'd be doing something . . .

Scribbling a quick note, Ace hurried from the hotel.

The car screeched to a halt and the Doctor and Bormann got out. Bormann looked proudly at the Doctor, anticipating his awed reaction. Hitler's newly built Chancellery was enormous. Two incredibly tall columns flanked the door. Above them a huge stone eagle, wings spread wide, perched on top of a wreath embossed with a giant swastika. At the foot of each column stood a motionless SS sentry.

The Doctor craned his neck to peer up at the eagle. "That is the most grandiose piece of architecture I have ever seen."

"It is perhaps a little overpowering, at first sight," admitted Bormann, feeling guilty at even this hint of criticism.

They went up a flight of steps and on through the door into a vast marble presentation hall. From there they climbed stairs to a reception room, then passed on through an enormous gallery whose shining marble floors stretched endlessly into the distance.

At the end of the gallery was a handsome circular reception room, about the size of a football pitch, where a number of familiar figures were standing around in little groups, most of them engaged in serious, low-voiced conversations. Goering was there, and other top Party officials.

To Barman's horror the Doctor said loudly, "You ought to run a bus service along here! Or at least issue bicycles. Roller skates would be a help."

Goebbels and the others looked shocked and disapproving. Goering chuckled and called, "An excellent idea, Doctor! Get on to it, will you, Martin? I'd like to see our little Heini on roller skates!"

With some relief, Bormann saw that Himmler wasn't present. He crossed the reception room and showed the Doctor into the holy of holies, the Fuehrer's study. The Doctor looked round in sheer disbelief, and Bormann could see that this time he really was impressed. The high-ceilinged room was a hundred feet long, and thirty feet wide. The dark red marble walls were hung with historical portraits and swastika-bearing shields. At the far end of the room was a massive

mahogany desk and in the red leather chair behind it sat Adolf Hitler, wearing, as he had promised, a simple brown tunic, his "soldier's coat".

Giving the Doctor a little push forward, Bormann slipped out of the room.

The Doctor drew a deep breath and set off on the long trek across the luxurious fitted carpet. Hitler smiled triumphantly as the Doctor approached, waving him to one of the armchairs grouped round the desk.

"Well, Doctor, what do you say now? It is two days since my armies entered Poland and its conquest is almost complete. Yet what do the British, or the French for that matter, say, or do? Nothing! Admit it! I was right, and you were wrong."

The Doctor sat quiet for a moment, calling on the formidable resources of his Time Lord memory.

"What is the date?" he asked quietly.

Adolf Hitler frowned. "September the third."

"And the time?"

Hitler glanced impatiently at a desk clock. "It is precisely one minute to nine."

Desperately hoping that his memory and his research were both accurate the Doctor said, "Then I ask you to wait - just that one minute."

The next sixty seconds were the longest of the Doctor's many lives. Had his unknown enemies outthought him? Was it here, here and now, that they had changed history, diverted the timestream? If so, he was lost, his credibility as a prophet destroyed.

Nine o'clock came at last, and somewhere in the Chancellery a clock began striking the hour. Before the last stroke had sounded the distant door opened and Ribbentrop hurried into the room. Behind him was a nervous, bespectacled little man clutching a sheet of paper.

"There is a communication from the British Ambassador. . . " He paused, flustered at the sight of the Doctor.

Hitler waved him forwards. "You may speak freely before Doctor Schmidt."

Ribbentrop advanced, gesturing to the little man to follow him. "This is my interpreter. His name also is Schmidt, as it happens."

"We are a numerous family," said the Doctor gravely.

"Shall I have him translate the message?" asked Ribbentrop.

Hitler nodded. Then he held up his hand. "Let me play the prophet, for once, Herr Doktor. Let me tell you what is in this message. It will be a formal note of protest, concerning my invasion of Poland. They will deplore, they will protest, they will whine, they will plead - but what will they do?

They will do nothing! They did not fight over Czechoslovakia and they will not fight over Poland."

Ribbentrop attempted to speak. "My Fuehrer Hitler waved him to silence.

"The message!"

In a quavering voice the interpreter began to read. "I have the honour to inform you that unless, not later than 11 a.m. today, September 3rd, satisfactory assurances have been given by the German Government that all German troops will be withdrawn from Poland, a state of war will exist between Great Britain and Germany as from that hour."

The Doctor felt a sudden wave of relief. The English had dug in their heels at last. They were going to fight. History was still on course.

There was still time.

6: TIMEWYRM

Ace took a taxi to the Kurfurstendamm. The driver put her down at the smart end, near the old cathedral. Out of some vague idea of security, she hadn't given the actual street.

A Sunday morning walk was obviously a favourite occupation with Berliners, and the whole area was full of people strolling along the wide pavements, staring in shop windows, having drinks at the

pavement cafes.

It looked the way Ace had always imagined Paris. Consulting her map, she.

found that Kronprinzenstrasse was off the other end of the Kurfurstendamm, away from the city centre, and as she walked along it, the wide tree-lined boulevard became quieter, less fashionable and more sedate.

Kronprinzenstrasse proved to be a quiet old-fashioned street just over a railway bridge. The address she was seeking was a big old house set back from the road. Cautiously Ace went up the path to the front door. To one side of the door was a small brass plate. Doktor Felix Kriegslieter: Aryan Research Bureau.

Beneath the brass plate there was something that looked like an extra large bell-push. Ace pushed it without results for a while before she realized you were supposed to pull it. She gave it a good heave, and it came free of its socket revealing a few inches of rusty wire. A bell clanged somewhere in the house, and with surprising speed the door opened - almost as if someone had been waiting for her to arrive.

Not that her reception was encouraging. An extremely unpleasant-looking man peered out at her. Middle-aged and of middle size, he had a high forehead and a perpetually sneering expression.

"Don't you know it's Sunday? We're closed!"

"I've got an invitation," said Ace brightly. She produced the engraved card and held it out.

The man took the card and produced a pair of round glasses with incredibly thick lenses. Putting them on he peered suspiciously at her. "You're not the Doctor."

"I'm his niece. He was unavoidably detained. He had to go to the Chancellery for a meeting with the Fuehrer," said Ace, feeling a bit of name-dropping couldn't do any harm.

"Doctor Kriegslieter's been called away as well," said the sneering man triumphantly.

"Right then," said Ace. "It's just the two of us then. Any chance of a look round?" The man took off his glasses and stood quite still for a moment. He might have been listening for messages from outer space.

Then he said,

"All right, come in then - if you really want to."

He opened the door and stood aside, beckoning her to enter.

The voice of the interpreter died away, leaving a terrible silence. Adolf Hitler sat quite still, staring into space. He might have been one of the heroic Fuehrer statues that gazed sternly forward in town squares all over Germany.

He was motionless for what seemed an age. Then, suddenly, he turned to Ribbentrop and shouted, "What now?"

Misunderstanding, Ribbentrop said nervously, "I assume the French will hand in a similar ultimatum within the hour."

"Get out!" screamed Hitler.

Ribbentrop and the terrified interpreter scuttled for the door. Hitler seemed actually to have shrunk, cowering like a child behind the enormous desk.

He stared at the Doctor with wide, haunted eyes. "They told me the English would not fight," he whispered.

"Who told you? The Black Coven?"

Hitler nodded. "They said it would be easy, like Austria, like Czechoslovakia... What shall I do, Doctor?"

"You must fulfil your destiny."

"My destiny!" repeated Hitler slowly.

The interpreter had left the sheet of paper on the desk. Hitler snatched it up and glared furiously at it. "They dare to send me an ultimatum," he whispered. "Me!" He leapt to his feet and screamed, "I shall destroy them! I shall annihilate their miserable little island - now!" Hitler began pacing to and fro, the rage rising in him like a roaring fire. The rage and the madness.

Unless it was checked, he might do anything. He might break down completely, leaving the war in more capable hands. He might even, thought the Doctor, order an immediate invasion of England - an invasion which might very well succeed.

Hitler glared at the Doctor, the light of madness burning in his eyes. The curtains of the Chancellery were swirling ominously, a vase flew across the room, one of the swastika shields crashed to the floor...

"I shall destroy them all," snarled Hitler. "Everyone, everything shall be destroyed!" There was a strange alien quality to his voice, and there was a silver shimmering around his form.

The Timewyrm, thought the Doctor. He's called up the Timewyrm again.

The Doctor leapt to his feet. Gripping Hitler by the shoulders, he stared deep into those burning eyes, summoning up every ounce of his willpower, forcing his ordered thoughts, his own mental strength into Hitler's confused and seething brain.

"Listen to me, Adolf Hitler," he commanded. "Listen to my voice. There is a great power within you - but it must be controlled or it will destroy you.

Control it now. Control it with your will!"

Hitler stared dazedly back at him. "The will," he muttered. "The will. My will must triumph!" Almost unbelievingly the Doctor saw the madness fade from Hitler's eyes. The storm of psychic energy faded, and the room was calm.

Releasing Hitler's shoulders, the Doctor returned to his chair. A nervous cough came from the far end of the room. The Doctor turned, and saw Martin Bormann standing anxiously in the doorway. Behind him hovered the tall form of von Ribbentrop, and behind him the massive bulk of Hermann Goering. The Doctor beckoned, and Bormann, the perfect bureaucrat, trotted across the carpet, a stack of dossiers in his hand. "My apologies, my Fuehrer, but there are a number of urgent matters here which demand your attention. Progress on the Polish front is far from satisfactory, Warsaw has not yet fallen. . ."

Hitler stared fixedly at his faithful servant.

"Only you can ensure victory, my Fuehrer," said Bormann desperately. It was exactly the right thing to say.

"You are right!" Hitler looked at the piece of paper in his hand. "But first, we must deal with this!" He raised his voice. "Send in von Ribbentrop - at once."

Ribbentrop was already on his way. "My Fuehrer?"

"Tell the British Ambassador that this ultimatum cannot be received or accepted - let alone fulfilled!" Hitler crumpled the sheet of paper and tossed it contemptuously on the desk. "Bormann, order my special train. I shall leave for the Polish front immediately, and take personal charge. You will accompany me."

The Doctor slipped quietly out of the room. So far, so good - or so bad, he thought. History was still on its terrible course. World War II was about to begin.

"I'll show you the visitors" library," offered the caretaker. Ace had a moment of worry, as she followed him up the stairs. Was she acting like the daft heroine of some thriller serial, wandering dimly into danger? She told herself there was no need to worry. The Doctor knew where she was - or would as soon as he got back and saw her note - and although he was no great charmer, the sneering man looked harmless enough. The house was reassuringly normal as well. It was a solid, old-fashioned building, spotlessly clean and smelling of lavender furniture polish.

The visitor's library was a huge, incredibly silent room, thickly carpeted, and lined with glass-fronted bookcases. There were display cases of ancient documents scattered about the room, and a big round central table with high-backed chairs ranged round it. In the centre of the table was a huge crystal ball. Maybe they told fortunes on the side.

"There you are, young lady," said the sneering man, who seemed to have turned friendly all of a sudden. "One of the finest collections of Aryan folk material in the country."

"I'm sure it is," said Ace politely.

He moved closer, putting on the thick pebble glasses again and staring deep into her eyes. "Tell me about your uncle."

"Who?" For a second Ace had forgotten the pretended relationship.

"The Doctor. Your uncle the Doctor. Who is he? Where does he come from? What does he want, here in Germany?"

The pale blue eyes, magnified and distorted by the thick lenses, stared into her own and the questions became more insistent. "Tell me! You must answer... Why is the Doctor here?"

Ace could feel the pressure of his mind battering at her own. But pressure was something Ace had never really cared for it brought out the worst in her. Glaring down at the little man she snapped, "Aren't you being rather rude? If you're so curious about the Doctor you can talk to him yourself. I'm sure he'll be visiting you very soon."

With a gasp the little man stepped back. He took off his glasses and rubbed his hand over his eyes. "Please forgive me. I have heard so much about this Doctor, you see, naturally I am curious. Please feel free to look round. I must get on with my work. . ." With that he positively shot out of the room.

He was trying to hypnotize me, thought Ace wonderingly. So they must be up to something here. Pleased at having been victorious in the curious little encounter, Ace started to look round. The place certainly didn't look as if it was going to be a bundle of laughs. She could make nothing of the ancient documents, which all seemed to be written in some strange runic script.

She opened one of the glass-fronted bookcases, took out a leather-bound volume and started to read.

It was pretty heavy going at first, but as she realized exactly what she was reading, Ace's blood started coming to the boil. This was racism expressed as a deliberate philosophy. There were pages and pages about the sacred mystique of the pure Aryan blood, and the necessity of keeping it pure and undefiled by "alien sub-species" and "under-men".

Ace tried another volume and found more of the same, endless ranting about blood and honour and the sacred soil of the Fatherland, the need for keeping the Aryan bloodstream of the master race uncontaminated by lesser breeds. The third book she tried had some very nasty stuff about blood sacrifice, and at this point she gave up in disgust.

She had encountered bigotry and racism before, but always in terms of simple brutality, a blow in the face, burning petrol through a letterbox. But to see such ideas written down, not just as an ugly scrawl on a wall somewhere but in books . . . To think that such books could be written, printed, published, a whole library of them, filled her with horror. She looked round the quiet peaceful room, feeling that it was filled with concentrated evil.

Suddenly she heard voices on the stairs. She ran back to the doorway

and listened. The bald man was talking to someone down in the hallway.

"She's here now," he was saying. "Not the Doctor, just the girl."

"And what has she told you?"

"Nothing. I tried, but even with the mind-amplifier . . . She has a strong will.

Did you see the Fuehrer? Was the Doctor there?"

"I missed them both," said the other voice. It was deep and melodious, full of authority and power. "I was delayed at the Castle. By the time I reached the Chancellery, the Fuehrer was about to leave for Poland. He refused to see me."

"And the Doctor?"

"He seems to have disappeared."

Slow, dragging footsteps began mounting the stairs.

7: GESTAPO

In the vast anteroom little groups of people stood in worried silence, obviously stunned by the news which Ribbentrop had just broken. Hermann Goering waited watchfully by the door to Hitler's study. When the Doctor tried to slip out without being noticed, Goering clamped a ham-like hand on his shoulder. "Look at poor old Goebbels, Doctor. No one's seen him so silent for years!"

The Doctor followed Goering's gaze and saw Goebbels standing in a corner, staring into space.

"A word with you, Doctor," said Goering, shifting his grip to the Doctor's arm. "There's a cubbyhole here they let me use."

Goering's office, reached by a march down more endless corridors, was a cubbyhole only in the sense that it was half the size of Hitler's, which made it merely enormous.

Dismissing various secretaries and aides, Goering marched straight to an elaborate drinks cabinet and poured himself a colossal brandy. He looked enquiringly at the Doctor, who shook his head. Goering took a huge swig of brandy. Then he said quietly, "If we lose this war, may

God have mercy on us! And we shall lose - if he remains in charge." He caught the Doctor's look of surprise and laughed. "Don't worry, Doctor, I'm not risking my head, or yours. This office is checked for microphones several times a day."

"Mutual trust is a wonderful thing," murmured the Doctor.

"Oh, we're a happy band of brothers all right! Now, listen to me, Doctor. I have served the Fuehrer loyally for seventeen years. He is a genius.

Unfortunately, he is also a madman. The two often go together I understand?"

He looked enquiringly at the Doctor, who didn't reply.

"The Fuehrer is also a gambler, with a gambler's luck," Goering went on.

"But no one wins forever. There's a time to pick up your winnings and leave the table. And Adolf can't do that! He'll go on raising the stakes till he loses

- and we will all lose with him."

Still the Doctor said nothing.

Goering laughed. "You're a cautious one, Doctor. Still, I don't blame you.

The news brought on another fit, didn't it?"

"There was the beginning of a fit - a particularly severe one."

"Which you helped him to control. Don't deny it, Doctor, I saw you. And if you can do that..." Goering poured another slug of brandy. "Hitler is a magician, a spellbinder. The German people will follow him anywhere, even to disaster. If he can be controlled - well and good. If he can't - someone else must take charge."

"Someone like you?"

"If necessary, yes. It would be my duty to the Reich. I need someone close to the Fuehrer," Goering went on. "Someone who can report to me on his condition - and, if it deteriorates beyond control - help me to take the necessary action."

The Doctor stood up. "I must be going."

"We understand each other, then, Doctor?"

"Oh yes, we understand each other. What do you know about the Black Coven?"

Goering looked curiously at him. Just how much did the fellow know?

"You're full of surprises, Doctor! Where did you hear of them?"

"From the Fuehrer."

"They're supposed to be top secret. Something to do with the SS - not my responsibility any more. They harness mystic forces or something - little Heinrich is very keen on all that mumbo jumbo. Why do you ask?"

"I think they may be influencing the Fuehrer's condition - very possibly for the worse."

Goering's eyes gleamed. "You mean Heinrich's using them to try and control the Fuehrer?"

"Something like that."

"I thought as much, he's a sneaky little bastard. See what you can find out, Doctor - but be careful. Our little chicken-farmer's come a long way. He controls the police, the SS and the Gestapo - and if they get their hands on you, even I won't be able to help."

Moving hurriedly away from the door, Ace sat down again at the table, and started leafing through one of the books. The footsteps came closer and closer, and at last an extraordinary figure shuffled into the room. It was the tall, white-haired, white-bearded old man she had glimpsed on stage at the Party rally and seen later, talking to the Doctor.

He was muffled from head to toe in a voluminous cloak. He moved quickly, but somehow painfully too, with the aid of a silver-headed cane, scuttling along with an odd, spider-like gait.

"How do you do, my dear," he said. "I am Doctor Kriegslieter." The deep melodious voice was that of a much younger man and Ace wondered what had happened to Doctor Kriegslieter. An accident, some terrible disease?

Uncannily, he seemed to read her mind. "You are wondering about the reasons for my somewhat extraordinary appearance? It is due to a misfortune I suffered at birth -or rather, at rebirth."

"I'm sorry," muttered Ace vaguely.

Doctor Kriegslieter waved the apology aside. "This is a most unexpected pleasure. Indeed I'm only sorry your uncle can't be with us. Unfortunately, the Doctor seems to have dropped out of sight."

"I expect he'll pop up," said Ace, trying not to sound worried. "He usually does."

"He does indeed," agreed Doctor Kriegslieter. "Sometimes with the most disconcerting results."

"You sound as if you know him," said Ace curiously.

"We met once, long ago and far away. In a sense I owe my present condition to the Doctor. I can't tell you how much I look forward to our reunion."

"But if it happened at birth. . . "

"At rebirth," corrected Kriegslieter gently. He glanced at the open books on the table. "And what do you think of our little library?"

Ace realized she ought to say something vague and tactful - but she just couldn't do it. "I think it's the biggest load of rubbish I've ever seen.

Dangerous rubbish."

The sneering man, who had followed Kriegslieter into the room, looked shocked. He went over to the table and started restoring the books to their places on the shelves.

Doctor Kriegslieter, on the other hand, seemed amused by her angry reply.

"I couldn't agree more. Absolute rubbish - bolstered up by ludicrous sham scholarship. Aryan blood indeed! Their precious Aryan race doesn't even exist - it's a myth. And even if it did, would it matter? What's the point of trying to prove that one breed of human is better than another? It's like trying to prove that a flea is more pure-blooded than a louse!"

Ace waved a hand around the room. "Then why bother with all this?"

"I'm afraid it's what the public wants."

"What public?"

"My public - which consists largely, I'm afraid, of Reichsfuehrer Heinrich Himmler and his merry men of the SS." He laughed again. "Himmler has an endless interest in all this racial mumbo jumbo - and in every other kind of mumbo jumbo come to that. Spiritualism, old teutonic folk myths, divination by pendulum-swinging, astrology . . . You name it, and little Heinrich will pay you a fortune to investigate it."

"You're not trying to tell me you're just in it for the money?"

He chuckled. "You're quite right, my dear, the money is useful, but it's not my prime motive."

"Then what is?"

"Oh, influence, shall we say?"

"You mean power."

"If you like. Himmler's a gullible fool, but he's the most powerful man in the Third Reich."

"Except for Hitler."

"Indeed. Which brings us back to the Doctor. You're sure you don't know where he is?"

"No, I don't." Ace started to edge towards the door. "I think I'd better go and look for him."

With spider-like speed, Kriegslieter moved to bar her way. "No, don't do that, my dear. I've a better idea."

"Oh, yes?"

"Simply stay here with us. The Doctor's bound to come and find you, in time."

Ace shook her head. "I like my idea better."

"But I don't," said Doctor Kriegslieter softly.

Ace measured the distance to the door. If she just barged Kriegslieter aside, then she'd only have to get past the other one...

"Please move out of the way," she said politely. "I'm leaving now."

Doctor Kriegslieter raised his silver-headed cane, and Ace saw that the tip was glowing red like a giant cigar. He raised the cane and brought it down in a slashing motion. One of the wooden chairs between the two of them simply fell apart in two equal halves, as if divided vertically by an invisible chainsaw.

"A fairly simple piece of laser technology," said Kriegslieter. "You first encountered it in Munich, if you remember. Sixteen long years ago for me, but perhaps rather less for you?"

Ace remembered the energy beam that had scorched the Doctor's ear, the scuttling figure vanishing behind the tree.

"Please don't move, my dear," said Doctor Kriegslieter. "I'd far rather keep you in one piece - at least till the Doctor arrives. I've waited a long time for this moment."

Ace stood very still. By the time she realized that the other man had somehow slipped round behind her, it was far too late.

Quite unaware that the last hours of peace were ticking away, the Doctor's chauffeur was dozing in the driving seat. The front window was wound down and he was enjoying the warmth of the sun. He might be there for minutes or for hours, he didn't know and he didn't care. Driving VIPs around was a cushy enough number, and Martin Bormann was a decent if fussy boss. With only the mildest interest he saw another black limousine, much like his own, draw up and park close by. Two men got out of it and approached him. They wore identical black leather coats and black soft hats and they had the same impassive faces and cold, emotionless eyes.

They looked at the Doctor's driver. "Name and business?"

The driver didn't argue. He knew who they were. "Horst Schultz, Martin Barman's office. I just brought Herr Bormann and another passenger."

"Passenger's name?"

"I didn't get it."

They looked at him.

"Honest, he just came out of the Adlon with Herr Bormann." With sudden inspiration, the driver added, "Herr Bormann called him Herr Doktor, that's all I know, honest. Little dark bloke, nothing special about him."

The two men looked at each other. The first one nodded, as if confirming something. The second man said, "That him?"

Schultz craned his neck out of the window and saw the Doctor coming down the steps. He nodded dumbly. He watched the two men go up to the Doctor and fall in on either side of him. He heard the Doctor's voice. "What is the meaning of this? I have been visiting the Chancellery at the personal request of the Fuehrer. I have just come from a subsequent conference with Reichsmarshal Goering himself."

The little feller had plenty of spirit, thought the driver but the two men didn't seem to be impressed by all the name-dropping.

"Papers!" said the first one impassively.

The Doctor searched through his pockets and produced a pass that Bormann had provided.

The man studied it. "You are the Herr Doktor Johann Schmidt?"

"Excellent! I see you can read. Then perhaps you can see that the pass is issued by Martin Bormann, Secretary to the Fuehrer?"

The man returned the pass. "Get in the car, Herr Doktor," he said, in a bored voice. "You're coming with us."

"On what authority?"

The second man took a black leather folder from his pocket, and flipped it open to show the Doctor a silver swastika badge. "Gestapo," he said.

The Doctor nodded thoughtfully, followed him to the second car and got in the back. The Gestapo man followed him.

The other Gestapo man leaned in the window of the Doctor's car. "You didn't see anything, right?" he said softly. "Your passenger didn't turn up, that's all you know. Unless you'd like to pay a visit to PrinzAlbrechtstrasse?"

Schultz shook his head dumbly, his throat dry with terror. The man gave a jerk of his thumb. The Doctor's driver put the car into gear and roared off at top speed.

The Gestapo man got in the remaining car and it moved away.

8: THE BLACK COVEN

The Berlin headquarters of the Gestapo was a handsome mansion in PrinzAlbrechtstrasse. As the Doctor got out of the black limousine, he noticed that the pleasant tree-lined street was completely empty. Nobody even passed by Gestapo HQ if they had any choice. The building was surrounded by a cordon of fear.

Keeping beside, and a little behind him, his impassive companions took him past the armed SS guards on the door, into the building and up the stairs. They showed him into an outer office with yet another guard on the door, handed him over to a severe-looking bespectacled female behind a desk, and went out without saying a word.

The female pointed to a row of hard chairs against the wall and returned to her paperwork.

The Doctor knew exactly what to expect next - nothing. He would be left where he was, perhaps for hours on end, ignored, given no information whatsoever, so that his no doubt guilty conscience could work on his nerves. The Doctor didn't actually need a great deal of sleep, but he had nothing against it when there was nothing better to do. Leaning back in his chair he closed his eyes and emptied his mind...

He was engaged in a heated argument with President Borusa and Lady Flavia about the best shade of pink for the Capitol curtains when he felt an angry tap on his shoulder. Opening his eyes he saw a furious bespectacled face hovering over him. "Herr Doktor, it is inappropriate and, I might add, unheard of to fall asleep in the anteroom of the Reichsfuehrer SS."

"I was not sleeping - I was contemplating," said the Doctor with immense dignity.

"You were snoring, Herr Doktor."

"Well, I'm not surprised," said the Doctor, changing tack. "If I'm kept here much longer I shall insist on sending to my hotel for my pyjamas."

"Prisoners of the Reich do not insist."

"Ah, but I'm not a prisoner," said the Doctor calmly. "I'm a guest - an honoured guest, I might add, of the Fuehrer himself. I've just come from a meeting with him. He will be most interested to hear how I have been received here - when we meet, as we most certainly shall on his return from Poland."

The female retreated behind her desk and picked up an office telephone.

After a low-voiced conversation, she put down the phone and said frostily,

"The Reichsfuehrer will see you now."

Feeling he was winning on points, the Doctor went through to the inner office. It was smaller, less ostentatious than any of the others the Doctor had visited in Berlin, a simple room furnished in plain dark colours. Heavy curtains were drawn against the sunshine, leaving the room gloomy and shadowed. A cave, thought the Doctor. A cave for a monster.

At the other end of the room, a neat, black-uniformed figure was at work on a pile of papers. Outlined in the circle of light from a desk lamp, small pudgy white hands picked up papers, one by one, from a pile on the left, signed them, and transferred them to a pile on the right. Just another petty civil servant immersed in paperwork, thought the Doctor. Paperwork that would eventually end millions of lives. There was a seat in front of the desk.

Uninvited, the Doctor went to it and sat down.

Himmler went on signing papers. When the last paper was signed, he pressed a bell on his desk. The bespectacled secretary came and took the papers and went out of the room.

Himmler looked up, light flashing on his rimless spectacles. In a quiet, almost shy voice he said, "We must come to an understanding, Herr Doktor. I have certain questions - you will provide the answers."

When the Doctor didn't speak, Himmler went on, "Perhaps I should tell you, Herr Doktor, that there are cellars beneath this building. I never visit them –

the sights and sounds of pain are repugnant to me. However, I am

sometimes forced to send people there. When they return, they invariably tell me everything I want to know."

"If they return," said the Doctor.

Himmler inclined his head. "Unfortunately, that is always a possibility." He actually managed a smile. "However, let us hope such unpleasant extremes will not prove necessary. You will begin by giving me an account of your conversation with Reichsmarshal Goering earlier today."

Choosing his words carefully, the Doctor said, "The Reichsmarshal is concerned for the Fuehrer's health. He knows, as I am sure you do yourself, of certain unfortunate episodes brought on by the strain and fatigue the Fuehrer must undergo."

"The Fuehrer is a saint," said Himmler with perfect seriousness. "He thinks only of the Reich, he never spares himself."

"Such dedication takes its toll," said the Doctor. "However, thanks to my studies, I have some understanding of these problems. When such an episode was triggered this morning by the British ultimatum, I was able to assist the Fuehrer to control it himself."

Himmler leaned forward. "But they said that was impossible."

The Doctor risked a guess. "Who? The Black Coven?"

The shocked look on Himmler's face told him he was right. The Doctor tried a little more inspired guesswork. "They told you that the Fuehrer's condition could only worsen? That one day it would be necessary for you to remove him – to replace him?"

"Never!" Himmler leapt to his feet. "I would never contemplate the slightest disloyalty to the Fuehrer."

The Doctor realized he was telling the truth.

"However," said Himmler, almost bashfully, "they did say that one day it might be necessary to relieve the Fuehrer of his intolerable burdens. Time for him to rule as a king - as an emperor - while other hands took over the daily cares of office."

"And that person would, of course, be you?" said the Doctor softly.

Himmler bowed his head. "He would always be our true leader, our

revered, our beloved Fuehrer."

So that's the plan, thought the Doctor. Hitler isolated as a powerless figurehead while Himmler rules the Reich, and the Black Coven rules Himmler. He became aware that Himmler was speaking.

"Herr Doktor, you have gone too far to turn back. You must tell me who you are -and how you know the deepest secrets of the Reich."

The Doctor was in a spot. He had to come up with an answer that would satisfy Himmler's curiosity. The truth was obviously out of the question. He decided to borrow from the techniques of his Nazi enemies and tell a really big lie. To satisfy Himmler, it would have to be a really loony lie as well.

The Doctor leaned forward urgently. "Reichsfuehrer, may I ask you a question – a question of vital, indeed of cosmic importance?"

"Continue!"

In a low, thrilling voice the Doctor said solemnly, "Reichschancellor! Do you believe in the Higher Powers?"

"I do," said Himmler wonderingly.

"Do you believe in the Great Work?" continued the Doctor in his most impressive tones. "Do you follow the Quest for the Holy Grail? Are you initiated into the Secret Doctrine of the Golden Dawn? Do you believe in the Cosmic Ice? In Atlantis, the secret home of the Master Race?" The Doctor racked his brains for more occultist mumbo jumbo, but he had said more than enough.

In a voice trembling with excitement, Himmler said, "I believe in all this and more! For many years now the Ancestral Research branch of my SS has toiled to uncover the occult sources of Aryanism. We have sent expeditions to Tibet in an effort to uncover traces of the Secret Masters. . ." Himmler lowered his voice. "Are you too one of the elect, Doctor, one of the Bearers of Secret Knowledge?"

Modestly the Doctor bowed his head. "I am."

"Of course!" said Himmler excitedly. "The Great Ones sent you to watch over the Fuehrer. You were there to aid and sustain him in Munich, moving silently, invisibly amongst us. And now, at the time of his greatest trial, you return!"

The Doctor realized he didn't even need to go on embroidering his own story. Himmler was happily doing it for him.

"Doctor, you must come to Drachensberg!" said Himmler solemnly.

"Ah, Drachensberg!" said the Doctor profoundly, wondering what Himmler was on about now.

"My castle," said Himmler proudly. "My SS Camelot. There, in the sacred Tower, Doctor Kriegslieter and his associates of the Black Coven toil to uncover the secret knowledge of the Ancient Ones. We must confer with Doctor Kriegslieter and decide what is best for the Reich. If, as you say, the Fuehrer can be completely cured, then I shall be happy to change my plans."

"Nothing would give me greater pleasure," said the Doctor hurriedly.

"Unfortunately, I have direct orders from the Fuehrer. I am to remain in Berlin awaiting his return."

Himmler frowned. Whatever his fears for Hitler's condition, an order from the Fuehrer was still sacred.

The Doctor rose. "I must return to my studies. If I am to find a complete answer for the Fuehrer's condition. . . "

Himmler rose from behind his desk and came round to the Doctor. "Of course, of course. When the Fuehrer returns from Poland we will ask his permission for you to visit Drachensberg."

The Doctor realized with some relief that Himmler seemed to have abandoned his suspicions, at least for the moment. He even escorted the Doctor to the door. In the outer office, the Gestapo secretary rose to her feet, shooting the Doctor a vicious glance.

"Shall I summon the Guards, Herr Reichsfuehrer?"

Himmler looked at her in surprise. "Certainly not. See that the Herr Doktor has anything he needs." He retired to his office, presumably to sign more papers.

The Doctor threw himself in a chair and crossed his legs. "A car to the Hotel Adlon please, my good woman. And make it snappy, will you? I haven't got all day."

On the way back to his hotel, the Doctor was thinking hard about

Kriegslieter and his Black Coven. Had a bunch of crooks and charlatans who'd got a grip on Himmler by playing on his superstitious fears put the eccentric and fallible Hitler to one side, and so changed the course of history? Was that all there was to it? Surely not. Totally diverting the course of history, so that the false time-stream became the true, required skilled intervention on a massive scale. No bunch of petty swindlers could manage that. Too many things were still unexplained. The attack on him in Munich, for example. The feeling of overwhelming familiarity that even a brief glimpse of Kriegslieter had given him. And above all, the precise involvement of the Timewyrm...

His mind filled with such reflections, the Doctor reached the hotel almost without realizing it. He strode into his suite and yelled, "Ace, where are you? Sorry I've been so long, I got hijacked, twice. . ."

Then he saw the note on the table.

9: DRACHENSBERG

Ace awoke in darkness. She tried to move and found to her horror that she was fastened upright in a T-shape by manacles at her wrists and ankles.

She could feel stone, cold against her back.

There was a sudden blaze of light. Burning torches were held close to her face, and in their flickering light, she saw sinister black-robed, black-cowled forms grouped around her in a semicircle. They fell back to reveal an even more ghastly figure, a black-robed priest in a hideous goat mask. He carried an enormous ceremonial knife with a huge curved blade, and he was stalking towards her.

The razor-edged blade touched her throat and she felt the sting as it drew blood. Ace prided herself on being tough. But waking up to find herself in the middle of a horror movie was just too much for her. She screamed, and fainted dead away.

Hastily paying off his taxi in Kronprinzenstrasse, the Doctor rushed up the path to the front door of the old house - and made himself pause and calm down. It wasn't certain, after all, that Ace was in any danger. He'd look a fool if he hurtled in like the US Cavalry and found Ace sipping tea and eating cream cakes with a gang of old lady librarians.

He studied the brass plate. He looked thoughtfully at the bellpull. He was just about to give it a heave when he noticed that the front door

was very slightly ajar. Cautiously the Doctor pushed it open and went inside. He went up the polished staircase calling, "Hello? Anyone about?"

There was no reply. He went into the visitor's library, and saw, like Ace before him, the glass-fronted bookcases and the big central table with its surrounding chairs. There was a gap, as if one chair was missing.

All in all, about as quiet and respectable a place as you could wish to find, thought the Doctor. All the danger and excitement of a trip to the local library.

The only thing at all out of place was the huge crystal ball in the centre of the polished table. The Doctor guessed that this was the refined, upmarket end of the supernatural business. A few s,ances for rich old ladies, a bit of crystal gazing . . . Was it simply a nest of cunning con-men after all - or was there more to it than that?

There was. The Doctor was just about to start searching the rest of the building for some clue to what had become of Ace when he noticed that a glow was coming from the crystal ball. He leaned over it, staring into its cloudy depths. Suddenly a picture began to form. It was Ace.

Ace chained to a wall in some kind of dungeon, surrounded by blackcowled figures. Ace menaced by a hideously masked figure holding a knife to her throat. A close-up of the knife touching Ace's throat, of the thin line of blood, of Ace screaming. The picture faded.

The Doctor stood quite still, hands resting on the table. After a few minutes, the picture started to reform. Ace chained to the dungeon wall, Ace surrounded by cowled figures, Ace menaced by the priest in the goat mask, Ace screaming . . .

It faded - and then returned, the same little sequence playing through again and again.

"All right, all right, I get the message!" shouted the Doctor. Snatching up the heavy crystal ball, he hurled it at the wall with amazing force, smashing it into a million tiny pieces. The Doctor went over to the fragments and studied them. No trace of electronic circuitry, nothing but crystal fragments.

So much for his theory that Kriegslieter and the Black Coven were simple swindlers. To project and repeat a telepathic image loop like

that showed power of a very advanced kind.

It was a message, of course - a message for him. It said simply, "Ace is in our hands. If we choose, we can kill her." In a way it was like the invitation that Ace had accepted in his place. Only now Ace herself was the invitation. They wanted him to come to them. "Dilly, dilly, come and be killed!" sang the Doctor softly. He would have to go of course. He would have to rescue Ace, settle with Kriegslieter and get them both free again.

But how?

Ace awoke again.

This time it was better. She was curled up on a fur-covered couch, and she was warm and comfortable. She stretched. If this was another dream, it was much better than the last one. Too many late-night horror movies, she thought.

She opened her eyes and looked around. She was in a largish room, more or less triangular, except that the outer wall, the one with the window, was curved. The room was shaped, thought Ace sleepily, like a slice of pie. The walls were of stone and looked very thick, but some effort had been made to make the place comfortable. There were brightly coloured heraldic shields on the walls, fur rugs, more furs strewn on the chairs and couches.

Whoever owned the place definitely wasn't into animal rights.

She went to the window, which was open but barred, and looked out.

Ahead and below was a wide vista of rolling wooded countryside. Ace felt that not only her window but the building itself was raised high up above the surrounding countryside. The castle, for that was what it felt like, must be built on a hill.

She heard faint shouting coming from directly below her, and craned her neck to look out and down. In a courtyard below, a squad of muscular blond young men, stripped to the waist, were going through a complicated series of exercises under the shouted orders of an instructor.

Just my luck, thought Ace. The place is full of bare-chested blond hunks and I'm locked up in here. At least, I suppose I'm locked in.

She went to the massive oak door and tried to open it. To her

astonishment, it opened. She found herself on a wide stone staircase which wound down to an enormous circular chamber, a vast stone hall divided into different areas. Ace stood at the top of the stairs, studying the busy scene below her. It was an amazing, complex sight. All kinds of different activities were going on simultaneously in the different sections.

One area held weapon-racks carrying everything from Luger automatics to grenades, rifles and machine guns. Here, black-uniformed SS men were stripping and cleaning an assortment of weapons. In front of the weapons area, so vast was the hall, was a parade ground, where another squad of SS men was being drilled by an instructor.

There was what looked like a high-tech medical area, where machines hummed and buzzed. In this section still more SS men lay rigidly to attention on simple military cots, which radiated like the spokes of a wheel from a vast central console. The men lay head-inwards and each man wore an oddly designed helmet, linked by electronic cables to the consoles.

Even as Ace watched the men, moving as one, took the helmets from their heads, swung their legs from the bed and stood to attention. A second group of men was taking their place, even as the first group formed a squad and marched away.

In the centre of the room was an open-plan control centre. Its illuminated screens held maps of Germany, of Europe, of Africa, of Asia - in fact, Ace saw, of all the world. Standing in front of the map of Europe was Doctor Kriegslieter.

Beside him was the sneering caretaker of the Aryan Research Institute.

There was something very different about him now. He wore a strange black uniform with a high-collared jacket. He wasn't wearing his thick glasses, and his whole bearing was that of a soldier rather than a scholar.

He glanced briefly at Ace and then went back to studying the maps, making marks on the screen with a light-pencil.

Kriegslieter looked up as Ace came down the stairs and crossed the floor of the hall towards him. "Ah, there you are. I trust you are rested. Are your quarters comfortable?"

"They are now," said Ace bluntly. "When I first woke up I was in some

kind of dungeon, surrounded by weirdies. Unless it was just a nightmare She broke off with a gasp as she caught sight of one of the monitor screens. On it she saw herself, chained to the dungeon wall, surrounded by blackcowled figures. She saw herself shrink from the priest with the knife, saw her own silent scream...

The sequence was repeated, again and again and again. "What on earth?"

Kriegslieter smiled, red lips curling in the white beard. "You might call it a trailer, my dear. As they say in the cinema, a preview of coming attractions.

It was recorded for the benefit of your friend the Doctor." He flicked a switch and the picture changed to a close-up of the Doctor, leaning forward, peering intently at something. "He is studying it now, you see. Very soon he will have to take action."

"What kind of action?"

"He will come here, to find you. To save you, if he can."

"Where's here?"

"You are in the Castle of Drachensberg, my dear, hundreds of miles from Berlin. This castle was purchased by Himmler in person, for the use of the SS. The Castle Tower, where we are now, is reserved for the members of the Black Coven, an inner elite group, the psychic shock troops of the SS."

Ace looked round the hall. "All this stuff, this hi-tech equipment, it's not from here and now, is it? Are you from another time? Another planet?"

The sneering man swung round. "Both," he said proudly. "We are the War Lords." He went back to his screens.

This meant nothing to Ace, so she ignored it. She glanced at the monitor.

Suddenly the picture fragmented and broke up, the Doctor's face vanished and the screen went black.

The one who called himself a War Lord studied a control console. "He's broken the receiving-unit."

Kriegslieter chuckled. "Ah, the Doctor grows impatient. It won't be long now."

"What are you talking about?" said Ace. "You said we were hundreds of miles from Berlin. The Doctor doesn't know where I am or how to get here.

And even if he did, he's not allowed to leave Berlin."

"The answers to all those questions are in the Berlin office of the Aryan Bureau, where we first met, if you remember?"

"I remember," said Ace grimly. She touched the lump on the back of her head.

"Well, that is where the Doctor is now." Kriegslieter laughed again. "I have great faith in his ingenuity. He will find the way. Of course, we mustn't make it too easy for him. That would spoil all the fun."

The picture-loop of Ace in the dungeon replaced that of the Doctor on the screen. She glanced at it for a moment, and then turned away in disgust. "I don't think much of your idea of fun. Are you telling me you staged all that nasty business in the dungeon, just to make the Doctor think I was in danger?"

"We recorded it to distress him," corrected Kriegslieter, "but I'm afraid you really are in danger. The Choosing is only a preliminary, but it is still an important ceremony in its own right."

"What do you mean, ceremony?" asked Ace nervously.

"Exactly what I say, my dear. The Priest - in this instance, myself - inspects the Chosen One and finds her acceptable. In token of this his knife takes a first taste of her blood."

Ace touched her fingers to her neck. To her horror, she felt a tiny scar.

You said a preliminary ceremony? Preliminary to what?"

"To the Great Sacrifice, of course. A Ceremony of Dedication to the old Teutonic Gods. You, my dear, are to be the traditional Virgin Sacrifice. I do hope you are qualified?"

To her disgust, Ace found herself blushing a furious red.

Kriegslieter waved dismissively. "It really doesn't matter, we certainly won't let a mere technicality stand in our way. The whole thing is

nonsense anyway, to be honest, I made most of the sacred ritual up myself. Still, it impresses Himmler and his cronies, and that's what matters."

The horror of what he was saying was so great that Ace found it hard to take seriously. She could scarcely take it in at all. Kriegslieter glanced at the sky through one of the arrow slits in the wall of the tower. "Time's getting on. I do hope the Doctor won't be too long. I'd hate him to miss your big moment."

10: ARRIVAL

In the peaceful library, surrounded by volumes of distilled hate and prejudice, the Doctor was thinking hard. They had shown him Ace in a dungeon. A dungeon meant a castle. The castle had to be Himmler's castle, Drachensberg – and Drachensberg was hundreds of miles from Berlin. But Ace was already there – and so was Kriegslieter.

Ace was in danger, but she wasn't dead yet. If that was all they wanted they could simply have left her body for him to find. If they were using her in some Black Magic ceremony, the traditional hour was midnight. If they were carrying out some Teutonic folk ritual, it could even be dawn. There was still time.

The Doctor rose and began moving around the library, palms flat against the oak-panelled walls. It was a long and painstaking business, but he found what he was looking for at last - a faint hum of energy. He stood looking at the section of wall. There was a knot-hole at eye level. He pressed the knot-hole and a section of the wall slid back, revealing a simple illuminated booth. It was as easy as that. Much too easy. It was, of course, a trap.

The Doctor studied the booth, and its simple control panel. It was a transmat, the crudest, most basic design, a simple link between one place and another. Berlin and Drachensberg. Or, if they'd gimmicked it especially for him, Berlin and a very messy death. Once he got into the transmat and pressed the send button he'd be utterly helpless. They could disassemble the molecules of his body here and reassemble them anywhere they chose. Anywhere or nowhere.

The risk had to be taken - but it could be modified a little. There was a telephone on the corner table and the Doctor picked it up. It was a long and difficult conversation, which called upon all his considerable powers of persuasion. Finally the Doctor said calmly, "The decision is yours, Herr Reichsmarshal," and slammed down the phone.

He started fishing through all the junk in his pockets. What had he done with his sonic screwdriver? Eventually, the Doctor came up with a Gallifreyan Army Knife of the kind issued to the Capitol Guard. On it was engraved: " *Property of Castellan Spandrell*." Must have picked it up without realizing, thought the Doctor. Kneeling by the control panel he set to work.

"The transmat network is activating," called the War Lord.

"Ah!" said Kriegslieter. "Then let us go and welcome the Doctor." Hobbling painfully on his stick, he led the way to the other side of the hall where there stood a simple illuminated booth. At the present moment, it was ringed by SS guards with machine pistols.

The War Lord studied a nearby control panel. "Any moment now."

The guards cocked their pistols. The transmat booth lit up. Then it blew up.

Everyone dodged back as fragments of booth rained down.

"It's a malfunction," shouted the War Lord. "He must have been killed."

"It's a trick!" screamed Kriegslieter. "He's tampered with the booth. He's here, somewhere. Search the tower, from roof to cellars. Search the whole castle. The Doctor's here - and I want him alive!"

A squad of guards thundered up the final stretch of stairs, threw open a hatchway, and emerged on to the flat roof of the tower. It was empty.

The anti-aircraft gun and its shell rack was in place behind the parapet. The SS banner hung limply against the flagpole in the still air of a windless summer afternoon. They looked over the crenellated parapet to the courtyard below, to the castle gate and the causeway across the moat.

Men marched and drilled, and there were guards everywhere, but there was no sign of any intruder. They climbed through the hatchway and clattered down the stairs to search elsewhere.

There was a moment of silence. Then the Doctor unwrapped himself from within the SS banner and slid down the flagpole. It had been a lucky landing, all things considered. He'd reprogrammed the transmatbeam to resassemble him a foot above the nearest solid surface in an upward direction, and then to selfdestruct. He'd overshot

by a number of feet, and the flagpole had saved him from a nasty fall.

The Doctor looked round the parapet, inspecting the antiaircraft gun and getting a good idea of the layout of the castle and the surrounding countryside. His plan was simple - to find and free Ace.

When he'd learned as much as he could on the roof, the Doctor climbed through the hatch and started moving cautiously down the huge spiral staircase that would round the interior of the tower. The tower was divided into a number of floors. The top one held dormitories and storerooms, the one below rather more superior living quarters. Below that was the great hall, one giant, high-ceilinged circular chamber which took up the whole of the bottom half of the tower.

The Doctor crouched at the top of the staircase, studying the busy scene below him. Weapons area, drill and training areas, mind-control section, central command area.

An impressive set-up - and one that was oddly familiar. The Doctor saw a slight, upright figure in a high-collared black uniform moving about the control centre. All at once, a whole stream of vivid memories came flooding back to him.

He saw the mud and barbed wire of a World War I battleground, with weary figures in battledress charging machine guns through a sea of mud. He saw a Roman chariot hurtling incongruously out of the mists, soldiers in the blue and grey of America's Civil War, and a Mexican guerilla brandishing his revolver. He saw his old companions, Jamie the fighting Highlander, little Zoe with her computer brain...

He saw cycles of meaningless slaughter, endlessly repeated, men wrenched from their own times to replay mankind's unending wars on an alien planet far away. All part of a complex scheme of galactic conquest.

And at the centre of it all, moving about their control rooms, emotionless calculating black-clad figures like the one below. The War Lords. And behind them, aiding them, manipulating them, giving them the time technology they needed, the Time Lord renegade who called himself the War Chief.

Or, in German, der kriegslieter.

"Well, he couldn't have spelled it out for me much more plainly," muttered the Doctor. "It's just not fair. I settled that lot ages ago. And I

thought he was dead."

The Doctor had paid a high price for that long-ago victory. So vast had been the temporal interference, so many the soldiers displaced from their own time, that the Doctor had been forced to ask his own people, the Time Lords, for their help.

That help had been given - at a price. Once they had him in their hands, the Time Lords had put him on trial for a wide variety of real and imagined crimes. The Doctor had always felt that his real crime was making them look foolish. In any event, the trial had followed its stately course. There was never any nonsense about justice in a Time Lord trial, thought the Doctor. It was more like a ceremony, a piece of theatre, proceeding on its way to a predetermined conclusion.

All in all, though, they hadn't been too hard on him. His companions, Jamie and Zoe, had been returned to their own lives and their own times. The Doctor himself had been sentenced to a premature regeneration - and a period of exile on Earth. But before that they had punished the War Lord.

For him there had been no mercy. He had been sentenced to temporal dissolution, a negation of his whole existence, the ultimate punishment.

Yet here he was - or someone very like him. And surely the renegade Time Lord, the War Chief as he was calling himself, had been killed by the War Lords themselves in some internal dispute . . .

The Doctor's reminiscences were interrupted by an amplified voice echoing around the great stone chamber. Down below, the ranks of blond, strangely identical SS men stood motionless to listen.

"Doctor!" called the voice. "This is the War Chief. If you are here, Doctor, and I am sure you are, make your way to the main chamber of the North Tower. But hurry, Doctor. Your young companion is here, and she will soon be in some distress. Make haste, if you want to arrive while she is still alive."

The Doctor saw a bustle of activity in the centre of the room. Then he saw Ace. She had been strapped to a wooden trestle table, and the table upended against a stone pillar. Kriegslieter stood before the pillar, his silver-topped cane in his hands. He twisted the knob and the tip of the cane glowed red. He slashed it towards the table in a diagonal motion and the top left-hand corner of the table fell away. Kriegslieter sliced off the right-hand corner.

He paused, speaking into some kind of amplifier.

"You see the principle, Doctor? My laser-cane is a precision instrument –

but the risk to your friend is constantly increasing. If I miscalculate, she may lose an ear or a finger, even a hand or a foot. Don't worry, she won't die.

The wounds will cauterize themselves, and I'll be sure to leave enough of her in one piece for our purposes."

He swung the laser-cane in a high arc, slicing a chunk off the top of the table and a tuft from Ace's hair in the process.

"Doctor!" yelled Ace. "If you're there, don't come out. He's just bluffing!"

Kriegslieter swung the cane in a low sweep cutting a slice off the bottom of the table and removing the toe of Ace's shoe in the process.

The Doctor stood up, cupping his hands. "All right," he shouted. "Show's over, I'm here!"

Every face in the hall turned towards him.

The Doctor strode down the staircase and across the hall. The knife was already in his hands, and he used it to cut the straps that bound Ace to the mangled table.

"Quite an entrance, Professor," she said. "Don't worry, they can't scare me."

She fainted into his arms.

Hermann Goering sat at his desk in the Chancellery. His huge fists clenched and unclenched on the desktop before him and he was glaring into space. One of the shrewdest political brains in Nazi Germany was calculating the odds.

To act would be risky. But to do nothing might be riskier still. When people were plotting against you, there was a lot to be said for striking first, and striking hard. The Fuehrer himself had proved that back in " 34. He had wiped out the entire leadership of his own private army, the Brownshirts, on the Night of the Long Knives. Two thousand executions in one day.

Goering shuddered, remembering little Heini calmly checking the death lists, ordering up another four Brownshirts for the firing squad as the bodies of the last four were dragged away. They had gone on killing till they were sick of slaughter. Even the firing squad had broken down in the end.

Yet, in a way, the memory cheered and encouraged him. The Fuehrer could hardly object when all Goering would be doing would be to follow his leader's own example. Besides - and this motive moved him more than any other - it would be a hell of a lot of fun!

He slammed his right fist down on the desk, sending a swastika-decorated desk-set jumping inches into the air. "I'll do it! And God help the Herr Doktor if he's wrong. I'll shoot the little devil myself?" Snatching up a telephone Goering bellowed, "Get me the Bendlerstrasse."

"Immediately, Herr Reichsmarshal." As he put through the call, the operator wondered why old Iron Fatty was in such a rush to talk to Regular Army HQ.

It was some time later, and the Doctor and Ace were confined in the luxurious quarters where Ace had awakened for the second time. This time the door was locked and there was an SS guard outside it as well. They'd taken the Doctor's Gallifreyan army knife away but otherwise they were being treated surprisingly well. A simple meal of bread, cold meats, cheese and wine and fruit had been provided.

Ace herself was still disgusted at her own behaviour. "Honest, Professor, me, screaming and fainting."

"You've got to stop clinging to this macho image," said the Doctor, selecting a grape. "In your place, I'd have been screaming the place down ages ago."

"My place isn't too good at the moment," said Ace. She had already told the Doctor of her projected role as sacrificial victim. "I hope you've got something up your sleeves."

"Several somethings." He lowered his voice. "Remember, Ace, whatever you do, react naturally."

The guard opened the door and Kriegslieter hobbled in.

"Come for a good gloat?" asked the Doctor amiably. "It's the usual procedure in these situations."

Kriegslieter studied the Doctor from the doorway. "You've changed, Doctor

– but not very much. You were an insignificant little man when we met, and you still are."

"Well, I tried tall and dignified, and all teeth and curls, but it didn't really suit me." He studied Kriegslieter curiously. "I may not have changed much, but you have," he said rather tactlessly. "At least, if you really are who you say you are. Used to be tall, dark and handsome didn't you? I heard you'd been killed - though come to think of it, they never found your body."

"I was shot, Doctor, but not killed. Shot several times, at close range with War Lord energy weapons. Would you care to know how I survived?"

"I've a feeling you're going to tell me."

"The War Lords" troopers were about to dispose of my body when they realized I was still alive. Just barely, but alive. You know how amazingly tough we Time Lords are, Doctor."

Ace stared at him. "You're a Time Lord - like the Professor?"

"Not at all like me, I hope," said the Doctor. "We come in all sorts, just like liquorice." He turned back to Kriegslieter. "I'm sorry, do go on."

"They called one of their scientists, and he was so amazed he ordered me sent back to their home planet - they were starting to retreat by then. I was on the last ship to leave."

"Why did they bother with you?" asked the Doctor curiously. "From what I remember of the War Lords, they'd be far more likely to finish you off."

"Oh, there was no thought of curing me, I assure you, Doctor. They just wanted to see how long it would take me to die. They threw me in the ship's hold and on the journey back to their planet I started to regenerate."

The Doctor nodded. Injury-triggered regenerations were not unknown. His own third regeneration had been caused by a massive dose of radiation.

Kriegslieter went grimly on with his story. It was clear to them both

that he had to tell it. "Because of my massive injuries, the extensive tissue damage, the complete lack of all medical care, the regeneration aborted."

"No," whispered the Doctor, and Ace saw the pain on his face.

Kriegslieter said remorselessly, "Would you like to see what an aborted regeneration looks like, Doctor?" He threw back his cloak for a second and Ace got a brief glimpse of a malformed bandage-swathed torso sprouting twisted limbs-stubby extra limbs.

It was as if two bodies had been clumsily joined together.

She turned her face away in horror.

"I will leave you to imagine the state of the skull," said Kriegslieter, wagging his huge, oddly-shaped head. "As you see, I conceal it as best I can."

"Regeneration therapy on Gallifrey is very advanced," said the Doctor.

"They could help you."

"At this stage, Doctor? I doubt it." Kriegslieter laughed. "Besides, what if they could? They would cure me - and then sentence me to death, or rather to temporal dissolution. Un-being, which is worse than death."

"Which reminds me," said the Doctor suddenly. "That fellow I caught a glimpse of out there. High-collared black uniform and a built-in sneer."

"He was the caretaker at the Aryan Bureau," said Ace. "But down here he said he was a War Lord."

"Now he really was sentenced to temporal dissolution," said the Doctor.

"What's more, I saw the sentence carried out."

"Upon his father, Doctor," said Kriegslieter. "This is the son, his successor.

There is a strong family resemblance. Like me, he has no reason to love Time Lords."

"Tell me something," said the Doctor suddenly. "Why did you leave the Time Lords to join with the War Lords in the first place? What had

you done?"

Kriegslieter laughed bitterly. "That is the final irony Doctor. I had done nothing, nothing at all - except rise so rapidly in the Time Lord hierarchy that Cardinal Borusa saw me as a rival. So, he had a quiet word with his friends in the Celestial Intervention Agency. Evidence of treason was manufactured and planted and found... I fled just in time."

The Doctor nodded. The story was all too believable. It had led a once-promising young Time Lord into a disastrous alliance with the alien War Lords. Ultimately, it had created the monster he saw before him.

"I'm afraid Borusa became quite ruthless in pursuit of his ambitions," he said sadly. "It was his downfall in the end, if it's any consolation."

"What happened?" asked Kriegslieter. "Did he ever become President?"

"For a time - then he tried for immortality as well, and got forced into permanent retirement. He's pretty inactive now - and likely to stay that way for some time." The Doctor rose and stretched. "Well, it's all very nice sitting here chatting about the good old days. But it doesn't explain what you're doing here and now."

"Gaining my revenge - on you, Doctor."

"I don't follow."

"I survived on the War Lord planet as a medical curiosity. I managed to convince them, in time, that I was not and never had been a traitor. I came to the attention of the new War Lord. I told him how his father had been destroyed - and convinced him that there was only one way to wipe out the shame of the defeat that you had inflicted on us."

"And that was?"

"The best, the only revenge, for him, as for me, was to come up with a plan for galactic conquest that would succeed."

"You could hardly be sure I'd turn up again to see it in action."

"Ah, but I spent years studying your record, Doctor - and it seemed very likely that massive interference with history would bring you out of the spatio-temporal woodwork. So, we found a way to penetrate the barrier the Time Lords had placed about our planet. Then we made our plan."

"Now I suppose we're going to hear all about that too?" said Ace. She was getting tired of being a silent audience.

Kriegslieter turned away. "I intended to show you something of our operation here -but as you please. You have long hours before you and little to do with them. But if you prefer to stare at the walls until it is time to die. . ."

"No, no," said the Doctor hurriedly, taking Ace's arm and heaving her to her feet. "Come on Ace, let's not be ungracious. There's nothing to read and the telly's hardly been invented yet, we may as well take the tour."

The Doctor had motives of his own. For one thing he was genuinely interested. Knowledge was always useful, and prospects of escape had to be better outside their luxury cell.

Kriegslieter rapped on the door, and the guard unlocked it. As she followed the others from the cell, Ace was thinking of Kriegslieter's words. They were going to be shown all the enemy's secrets, told all his plans. Quite obviously, Kriegslieter wasn't concerned about what they saw, or how much they learned about his plans. It simply didn't matter.

Before very long they'd be dead.

CONQUEST

Kriegslieter led them out of their quarters, down the stairs and across the main hall to the control centre where the War Lord stood brooding before his map screens.

"I have brought our guests, War Lord. I thought it might amuse you to explain your plans for the final conquest of the galaxy."

"Our plans, War Chief," said the War Lord. "You are too modest." He looked curiously at the Doctor. "This is a great pleasure, Doctor. I have been waiting a long time for a chance to meet you, and to repay my debt."

"Don't think of it as a debt," said the Doctor politely. "Spoiling your father's evil schemes was a pleasure."

The War Lord said coldly, "The basic idea of that first plan, the one you interfered with, Doctor, was as you know, to kidnap soldiers from Earth's different time zones, set them fighting what they thought were

still their own wars, and to select an elite force from the survivors. It was, to say the least, a little over-complex."

"Let's be honest," said the Doctor cheerfully. "It was a madman's flytrap, a dog's breakfast of a plan. It was starting to go wrong even before I turned up."

"There were certain problems," admitted the War Lord stiffly. "The difficulty of brainwashing and keeping brainwashed so many men, the consequent growth of resistance movements in the different time zones. . . "

"Precisely," said the Doctor cheerfully. "A dog's breakfast."

Ace wondered if it was wise of the Doctor to annoy the War Lord so much.

But then again, what had they got to lose?

Gritting his teeth, the War Lord went on with his lecture. "However, we were still convinced that Earth was the best planet for our purpose, that the human race had the best characteristics to form our army of killers."

"They're a bloodthirsty little species all right," agreed the Doctor, with a thoughtful look at Ace. "Often said so myself."

"So we made use of the time-scanning equipment provided by our friend the War Chief to study Earth's history and we found all this!"

With a sweeping gesture the War Lord indicated the ranks of SS men, the swastika banners on the wall. "A nation, a government, dedicated to the same ends as ourselves. And within that nation a chosen elite, even more dedicated than the rest. Most of our work was done for us already."

The Doctor nodded. "I see what you mean. Unquestioning obedience, total ruthlessness, naked aggression - this lot are pretty well brainwashed already."

"Exactly," said Kriegslieter. "Do you realize, Doctor, that these men all undergo two years of brutal training before they are permitted to call themselves members of the SS? When we take them over they are preconditioned. A very slight adjustment, and the process is complete." The War Lord raised his voice. "You there!"

One of the blond giants doubled across and came to attention before them.

Ace looked at him in fascination. He was a hunk all right. Six foot three, stern handsome features, close cropped fair hair, blue eyes. Yet somehow she didn't fancy him, couldn't even think about fancying him. It was the eyes that were the problem, she thought. They were totally expressionless.

The man was no longer human.

As if answering her thought the War Lord said, "There is so little humanity left in them when we take them over, it is a simple matter to remove the rest." Looking up at the giant towering above him he snapped, "Helmet.

Grenade."

The man marched over to an alcove set in the tower wall, next to the weapons section. At a gesture from the War Lord, they all followed. They watched the man take a steel helmet from a rack and put it on, and select a grenade from a wooden crate. Then he stepped inside the alcove. A thick transparent shield slid across the front.

"Watch closely," said the War Lord. He nodded to the SS man.

Unbelievingly, Ace saw the man pull the pin from the grenade, balance the grenade on his helmet, and stand to attention. Seconds later, there was a muffled explosion and the alcove filled with smoke. The shield slid back, the smoke cleared, and there was the SS man. The helmet was mangled by the blast, blood trickled from his nose and ears, and his face was bleeding from a deep gash in the cheek. But he still stood rigidly to attention, blue eyes staring blankly ahead.

"Quite a party trick," said the Doctor.

Kriegslieter laughed. "Believe it or not, that is a standard SS training exercise. But for us, he would do it without the helmet. Would you like to see, Doctor? I assure you, he would obey."

"No, no," said the Doctor hurriedly. "Waste not, want not, you know."

"Medical section," said the War Lord, and the bleeding giant marched away. The War Lord led them back to the control area. "They do not fear pain or death any more, you see."

"Well, why should they?" said the Doctor reasonably. "After all, they're not really alive. And what do you plan to do with your zombie army?"

The War Lord tapped the map. "We shall rewrite Earth's history, Doctor.

First we shall ensure that Hitler wins this war."

"And how do you propose to do that?"

"Adolf Hitler is a flawed genius," said Kriegslieter. "A man with great talents

- and with enormous weaknesses. We have accentuated the talents. . . "

"By boosting the powers of oratory?" asked the Doctor.

"Quite so - but how did you know?"

"I saw you doing it at Nuremberg. Psychic amplification, isn't it?"

Kriegslieter nodded. "He has an extraordinary power to arouse raw emotion in a crowd. If that power is boosted - the technology is relatively simple, as you know -the results are quite amazing."

"We saw," said Ace.

Kriegslieter lifted a complex-looking piece of equipment from a table. "What you saw, or rather felt, was the effect of Hitler's natural powers, boosted by me, sitting in close range, wearing this - a simple psionic amplifier." He smiled wryly. "This cloak can cover more than my deformities when necessary."

The War Lord took up the story. "We shall also correct the disastrous errors of judgement. France will be overrun, just as before, but this time there will be no fatal delays in following up the victory. Britain will be swiftly overwhelmed as well."

"What about America?" asked the Doctor.

"If England is conquered quickly, America will accept the fact. There is a strong isolationist party there as it is."

"And Russia?"

"The treaty will be kept. There will be no attack on Russia, not yet.

That was the second mistake. We consolidate our grip on the continent. We move carefully one step at a time, Asia, Africa, the Far East. We provoke war between Russia and America, so the two giants destroy each other, and we take over what remains. It will take time, Doctor, but we shall achieve our goal - a Nazi Earth."

"And even that is only the first step. We shall force the pace of Earth's scientific development - atomic weapons, a star-drive, a space fleet. When we are ready, we shall conquer the galaxy!" said Kriegslieter.

"A Nazi galaxy," said the War Lord. "In time, a Nazi universe."

"A War Lord universe," said the Doctor. "With you lot pulling the strings.

How do you plan to work it, exactly?"

He sounds genuinely interested, thought Ace. Perhaps he is.

The War Lord frowned. "That is not finally decided. The most obvious way was to work through the man Hitler. He has remarkable powers. He is the focal point of the whole regime. But he has become strangely unreliable, and we are finding it harder and harder to control him. We fear complete breakdown."

"Won't that put a crimp in your plans?"

"Not at all. We shall simply replace him with Himmler," said Kriegslieter.

"Since he already controls the SS, it will be even simpler."

"And Goering?"

"Too individualistic. He will be disposed of."

"How much does Himmler know about all this?" asked Ace, gesturing around her. "The brainwashing, all the hi-tech stuff?"

"Very little," said Kriegslieter. "He accepts this tower as a sort of inner sanctum and stays away. He prefers to think of our assistance as being supernatural rather than scientific. I have more to show you, Doctor. With your permission, War Lord?"

The War Lord nodded dismissively and went back to his map screens.

Kriegslieter led them across the hall to the staircase, which continued

downwards. With a gesture, he summoned two SS guards to follow them.

"Don't even think of escape, Doctor," he said as they went down the stairs.

"You are in a fortress within a fortress, with guards everywhere. You have only the illusion of liberty."

He paused at the vaulted doorway of a huge chamber. "Our chapel, my dear," he said, giving Ace a ghastly smile. "This is a side entrance, the main door is at the rear."

They looked through the doorway. The huge vaulted chamber was hung with swastika flags. High-backed stone seats, each decorated with carved SS insignia, were grouped in semi-circles around a great stone slab of an altar. There was a swastika banner behind the altar, and a flanking pair of candle holders with huge black candles. The altar was carved with strange esoteric runes. Ace saw with horror that its surface was dark with the stains of old blood.

Kriegslieter caught the direction of her gaze. "Chickens," he said. "One or two cats, the odd lamb. Tomorrow will be our first attempt at the real thing, so to speak. Since the war has finally begun, I felt something more impressive was in order. We were going to use one of our young SS men, but you arrived so opportunely. . ."

"Yeah, just my luck," said Ace.

He led them from the chapel, still further downwards, to a point where the gloom of the staircase was replaced with a blaze of light. Opening a steel door he took them into a small, brightly lit control room. There were rows of dials and switches and a glass window that looked out over a much larger area, a vast underground chamber filled with great gleaming metal tanks, linked by walkways and gantries and overhead cranes.

It meant nothing to Ace, but the Doctor seemed to recognize it. He looked at Kriegslieter, genuine shock in his face. "That isn't. . ?"

"It is indeed, Doctor," said Kriegslieter triumphantly. "A fully automated atomic reactor. When the time comes, the Fuehrer's rockets will have nuclear warheads."

The Doctor was appalled. "You'll destroy the planet!"

"We'll only use them on the larger countries," said Kriegslieter reassuringly.

"Russia, China, America. They're big enough to soak up a bit of radiation.

And there'll be no nuclear retaliation, remember, no nuclear war as such."

"What makes you so sure?"

"We shall be the only country with atomic weapons."

He led them towards the door. "Well, Doctor, that concludes what you are pleased to call the tour. I think you should return to your quarters and rest.

A trying time awaits you."

Flanked by the ever-present guards, they began climbing the stairs.

Once they were back in their quarters the Doctor said, "You've made your plans for Ace abundantly clear. What about me?"

Kriegslieter turned in the doorway. "I am glad you asked, Doctor. Firstly, you will attend tomorrow's ceremony, and witness the death of someone you - love? Care for, at least. Then - you remember my SIDRATS, Doctor?"

"Primitive time machines - with a limited shelf life?"

"An unkind but accurate description. After the ceremony, we shall require the location of your TARDIS. Once that is ours, we can reproduce it, conquer time as well as space."

"Out of the question," said the Doctor indignantly.

"Oh, you will tell us, Doctor. We shall take your mind to pieces like a watch.

Of course, one or two of the parts may get broken in the process - but that really doesn't matter."

"It doesn't?"

"Once I have wrested from it the secret of the TARDIS, your mind will be of no further interest to me. But your body. . ."

"Please," said the Doctor, looking embarrassed. "Ladies present."

"We are both Time Lords, Doctor, our brains and our bodies are compatible. Regeneration therapy is far beyond the War Lord's scientists, but even they can manage a simple brain transplant."

Kriegslieter studied the Doctor with detached, clinical interest. "To be honest, it isn't the body I would have chosen but it's infinitely superior to the one I have. When all this is over, Doctor, I shall be you - and you, or whatever shattered gibbering remnant of you is left, will be me.

Appropriate, don't you think? A crippled mind in a crippled body. . . "

12: CEREMONY

When they were alone Ace said thoughtfully, "To be perfectly honest with you, Doctor, there are one or two things about our present situation I'm not really crazy about."

"At least you're playing the leading lady," pointed out the Doctor. "How would you like to be condemned to a bit part as Quasimodo, the Hunchback of the Reich?"

"He's certainly got it in for you, hasn't he, Professor? Not only twisted but bitter as well."

"He used to be a devilishly handsome fellow, you see. He resents the change, and thinks it all my fault."

"And is it?"

"Well, I may have spread a bit of dissension between him and his War Lord allies. Still, they seem to have made up now, don't they?"

They were whistling in the dark and they both knew it. The merry chitchat always ran out in the end, thought Ace despairingly. "Are we going to get out of this, Doctor? Alive, in one piece - and in our own bodies, I mean?"

"I hope so," said the Doctor sombrely. "But maybe not until the last minute.

There's a lot more than just us at stake, you see, and I can't leave with the job undone. There may have to be..."

"Sacrifices?" said Ace.

The Doctor didn't reply.

After a moment Ace said, "When old nasty was talking about someone you loved, or at least cared for. . . "

"He was right the first time."

Ace yawned and stretched out on the couch. "Better get some rest. I want to look my best in the morning." She looked seriously at the Doctor. After a moment she said, "Just do whatever it takes to get the job done, Professor.

That's what counts."

Ace closed her eyes, and drifted off to sleep. The Doctor sat in a fur-draped chair, gazing out through the arrow slit at the darkening sky.

The Doctor awoke, and found Ace gone. A drug in the food and wine, he thought, or gas under the door. He ran to the door and started to pound on it. Instantly the door swung open. There stood Kriegslieter, SS guards beside him. He was wearing a black robe with a black hood, and carried another on his arm.

"Time to go, Doctor. It will soon be dawn."

"Where's Ace?"

"She is being prepared. Don't worry, you'll see her soon. Put this on, will you Doctor? Formal dress for the ceremony."

The Doctor didn't move. But he stood unresisting while, at a gesture from Kriegslieter, the SS guards put the robe on him, thrusting his arms in the wide sleeves and pulling the hood over his head.

"I hope you'll enjoy the ceremony," said Kriegslieter as they moved off down the staircase. "It's a bit of a hotchpotch, I fear. I cobbled it up myself from the more colourful bits of Teutonic mythology. I trust Himmler appreciates all my trouble."

"Himmler's coming?"

"My dear Doctor, the whole thing is largely for his benefit. Him and some senior SS cronies. I just hope he doesn't faint at the vital moment. He's terribly squeamish, hates the sight of blood. . ."

The main doors of the tower were standing open.

"We assemble in the courtyard," said Kriegslieter. "Then we file in through the main entrance." He might have been a fussy old don at some obscure degree ceremony.

The main courtyard of the castle formed the background to a grim and terrifying scene. It was lined with black-uniformed SS guards bearing blazing torches. Their fiery light revealed a sinister procession forming up in the courtyard. There was something very unpleasant about the double line of black-robed, black-hooded figures in the flickering torchlight. It reminded the Doctor of old, long-ago horrors, the Spanish Inquisition, the evil black magic cults that had flourished in Europe hundreds of years ago. It was peculiarly horrible to see this sort of thing revived, deliberately and cynically, in a century that should have left it far behind. Most horrible of all, they were planning to slaughter Ace in a sacrifice to their own dark gods.

The Doctor looked round desperately for help, for some way of escape.

Suddenly, at the head of the procession he saw a familiar figure, a diminutive shape almost swallowed up by flowing black robes. Before anyone could stop him the Doctor broke ranks and ran to the front of the procession. "Herr Reichsfuehrer!"

Himmler's rimless glasses glinted at him from under the hood. "Herr Doktor

– you are here after all!"

"I decided that you were right, that it was necessary for me to come. I have grave news, news that concerns the Fuehrer himself."

Kriegslieter hobbled up beside the Doctor with surprising speed. "You will come away at once, Doctor," he said furiously. "How dare you annoy the Reichsfuehrer like this?"

Himmler held up his hand. "Let the Herr Doktor speak."

The Doctor pointed accusingly at Kriegslieter. "I am sorry to say that this man cannot be trusted. His ambitions go far beyond anything you would countenance. He plans to remove the Fuehrer - and replace him!"

"Remove the Fuehrer!" Himmler was outraged. "Replace him? With whom?"

"With you, Herr Reichsfuehrer."

Himmler swung round on the astonished Kriegslieter. "Is this true?"

In his confusion, Kriegslieter made a near-fatal error. "It may have been discussed, as a possibility. . ."

"Never!" said Himmler passionately. "Never will I subscribe to any action against the Fuehrer. I exist only to serve him." It was quite clear that he meant exactly what he said.

Kriegslieter was stunned. He'd naturally assumed that Himmler was as corrupt as all the other leaders.

Offer Goering or Goebbels a proposition like that and they'd jump at it, thought the Doctor. But little Heinrich is genuinely devoted to Adolf.

He glanced at Kriegslieter and thought grimly, I scuppered you once by causing trouble with your allies, maybe I can do it again!

Stunned as he was, Kriegslieter soon recovered. "If I have erred, I am sorry, Herr Reichsfuehrer. I submit myself entirely to your guidance. But may I urge that we discuss these matters after the Ceremony? The dawn is approaching, and if the propitious time is lost, the whole course of the ceremony may be endangered. If we are to summon the Ancient Powers to our aid in winning this war. . ."

A fanatical gleam came into Himmler's eyes. "We must not lose the moment. After the ceremony, we will settle this matter once and for all."

The Doctor saw there was no chance of talking him out of it. "Very well, after the ceremony," he said, and took Himmler's arm. "Shall we continue, Herr Reichsfuehrer?"

The procession set off, Himmler and the Doctor at the head. Kriegslieter, baffled at least for the moment, was forced to follow them. They filed into the chapel and took their places, filing up from the rear entrance, filling up the rows of stone seats. The Doctor sat beside Himmler in the very front row. The black-robed, black-hooded figures sat, arms folded, in solemn silence. The light from the blazing torches of the SS guards flickered on the swastika banners, the heraldic shields and the dreadful bloodstained altar.

The sacrificial victim was brought in.

They'd dressed her in a flowing white robe and her hands were bound.

She was staring straight ahead, moving like a sleepwalker. Drugged, thought the Doctor. It's probably just as well.

Kriegslieter stood beside her behind the altar, the shape of his twisted body visible even beneath the robes. On the altar before him lay a hideous goat mask, and a huge ceremonial knife.

The ceremony began.

The Doctor didn't pay much attention. There was a great deal of chanting and intoning, and long rambling prayers from Kriegslieter, addressed to the spirits of the Ancient Masters and a weird variety of Teutonic gods.

The Doctor's eyes were on a slit in the wall, high in the east side of the chapel. When the sun rose, a beam of light would slant down from that slit and strike the altar. That, surely, would be the moment of sacrifice. It would need very careful timing.

The ceremony droned on.

Through the slit in the wall the sky grew lighter. At a command from Kriegslieter the torches were extinguished. They stood there in smoky darkness, waiting for the dawn.

Kriegslieter gave another signal. Two black-hooded figures stretched Ace on her back on the altar, her head projecting over the edge. Kriegslieter reached for the mask and put it on. He stretched out his hand for the knife .

. .

The Doctor leapt to his feet. "No!" he shouted.

Himmler looked up. "What is the meaning of this, Herr Doktor?"

"I wish to prove my total loyalty to the Reich," said the Doctor passionately.

"There on the altar lies my niece, the person I love most in all the world. To Doctor Kriegslieter she is nothing. But if I sacrifice her, that sacrifice will have true meaning. Was it not you, Herr Reichsfuehrer, who said we must lay all that we hold most dear on the altar of the Reich?"

Himmler was deeply moved. "A noble sentiment, Herr Doktor. Perform

the sacrifice!"

Kriegslieter made no objection as the Doctor moved behind the altar. He spoke, his voice muffled by the mask. "Will you really go as far as this, Doctor, to save your own skin?"

"Try me."

"It won't work, you know. Even Himmler can't save you now. Still, do go ahead. It's a delicious refinement - I only wish I'd thought of it myself." He handed the Doctor the knife. "Decapitation is the prescribed method, if you hadn't guessed. And do try to get her head off in one stroke, Doctor.

Nothing spoils a Ceremony more than a lot of inelegant hacking about."

The Doctor took the knife and looked down. Ace's eyes gazed up at him, her hair hanging down like a curtain. Incredibly she smiled.

The ray of light struck the altar. The knife flashed down.

13: WAR GAMES

Hitler's Chancellery was in semi-darkness. The Fuehrer, accompanied by his faithful Bormann, had returned unexpectedly from Poland in the middle of the night and only a few lamps had been lit in the endless corridors. In Hitler's study only the desk lamp burned. The Fuehrer sat, studying documents and signing papers, surrounded by a huge pool of swirling shadows.

At his elbow, the faithful Bormann watched his leader with concern. Not that Hitler seemed ill; far from it. That was the trouble. He was, if anything, all too well. To Barman's knowledge Adolf Hitler hadn't slept and had hardly eaten in the time between their sudden departure for Poland and their even more sudden return to Berlin. He had conducted the early stages of the Polish campaign with incredible energy, and had now returned to the Chancellery to oversee the rest of the war.

Hitler handed Bormann the last document and said impatiently, "Is that all?"

"There is one other matter, my Fuehrer, a rather strange and worrying affair."

"Tell me."

Bormann opened a file and produced an official letter on Wehrmacht stationery. "It is a complaint from the duty officer at the Bendlerstrasse."

Bormann hesitated. "It concerns Reichsmarshal Goering."

"Well?" "Apparently the Herr Reichsmarshal arrived unexpectedly and demanded the immediate provision of an armoured column - on his personal authority alone. As soon as the column was assembled, the Reichsmarshal took charge of it and left Berlin."

"For what destination?"

Bormann swallowed hard. "It appears that his destination was Drachensberg – one of the castles acquired by Reichsfuehrer Himmler for the use of the SS. It is being used by Doctor Kriegslieter and his staff for certain researches."

Bormann had never trusted Kriegslieter. He didn't like his influence, over Himmler and over the Fuehrer himself. He was appalled at the enormous unnaccounted-for sums that flowed regularly from SS funds into Kriegslieter's hands. Above all, as a highly conventional member of the bourgeoisie, he was appalled by the sinister rumours of bloodcurdling goings-on at Drachensberg Castle.

Hitler frowned. "Drachensberg . . . I know of the place, though I have never been there. So, our Reichsmarshal plans to visit Drachensberg?"

"More than that, my Fuehrer. My understanding is that he is planning to attack it."

Jammed into the front passenger seat of an armoured car that was far too small for him, Hermann Goering rose to his feet, sticking his head and shoulders through the open roof-hatch.

He stared ahead at the dark country lane, illuminated only by the armoured car's headlights. He craned his head and looked at the lights of the armoured column stretching behind him. He looked to the east where pale streaks were appearing in the night sky. Finally he sat down and turned to the army driver. "How much longer?"

The driver, a tough old veteran of the Wehrmacht, shrugged. "We ought to be almost there, Herr Reichsmarshal. But on these country roads, in this darkness, at this speed, who knows? We might be

hopelessly lost."

"We'd better not be," said Hermann Goering grimly. "If we don't arrive by sunrise we'll be too late . . ."

The knife flashed down, severing Ace's bonds.

At the same time the Doctor's other hand swept upwards like a fast bowler, hurling Ace's last, confiscated capsule of nitro-nine at the ceiling.

The explosion was shattering in the confined space and most of the chapel ceiling came down, showering the black-robed figures with dust and rubble.

The Doctor threw Ace over his shoulder and sprinted out of the side door and up the stairs. He hadn't gone very far before he realized Ace was kicking and struggling. He put her down, took her hand and started pulling her up the stairs. "I thought you were drugged."

"I was just shamming scared stiff. Well, to be honest, I was scared stiff. I mean, talk about leaving things to the last minute..."

An SS guard appeared before them aiming a machine pistol. The Doctor sprang at him like a tiger, wrenched away the pistol and clouted him under the jaw with the butt.

"So much for the supermen," said Ace, stepping back as the giant fell.

"Gimme that gun!"

"Why?"

"Because you're much too squeamish." Cocking the pistol, Ace sprayed a hail of bullets down the stairs to discourage pursuit. "Where to, Professor?"

"Up. All the way to the top." They met only one more guard all the way to the top and Ace shot him down without a second thought.

"I hope you're not enjoying this too much," shouted the Doctor.

"Just a bit of my own back, Professor!"

They reached the very top of the stairs at last, and climbed through the hatchway on to the top of the tower. The Doctor barred the hatchway behind them.

"That won't keep the massed Nazi hordes out for long, will it?" asked Ace sceptically.

The Doctor was at the parapet, peering towards the gates. "They'll have other

things to worry about before very long. Come and look."

Ace came to join him at the parapet. A long, straight road led up to the castle gates and down it a column of dust was moving steadily towards them.

"What is it?" asked Ace. "And who is it?"

"The what is an armoured column," said the Doctor. "The who, unless I'm very much mistaken, is our old friend Hermann Goering, playing the part, for this performance only, of the US Cavalry."

"How did you persuade him to do that?"

"I telephoned him before I came down here to join you. I told him Drachensberg was a hotbed of treason, and that Himmler and the SS were plotting to knock him off. "

"And he believed you?"

"Why not? It's what he'd do to Himmler if he had the chance. I also told him that if he'd turn up here in force I'd give him positive proof."

"And can you?"

"'I'll think of something," said the Doctor cheerfully.

The column was fast approaching the main gates now. It consisted of a row of jeep-like vehicles, some of them mounted with guns, all of them crammed with grey-clad soldiers. In the passenger front seat of the leading vehicle, a corpulent figure in a sky-blue uniform stood up in a commanding position.

"There he is," said the Doctor. "Iron Fatty in person! Mind you, at the moment, he seems to think he's Rommel."

Goering was arguing furiously with the SS sentries on the castle wall by the gate.

"What's going on?" asked Ace.

The yard below them was full of black-uniformed and black-robed figures, all milling about and asking the same question.

"In this instance, too much jaw, jaw, and not enough war, war," said the Doctor. "Pass me one of the shells from that rack would you, Ace?"

The little anti-aircraft gun was a fairly simple piece of machinery, and it didn't take the Doctor long to figure out how it worked.

" So if the shell goes in the loading chamber here, and this is the firing lever here . . . "

There was a sudden explosion, the gun bucked and recoiled, and a shell whistled over the head of the armoured column bursting on the other side.

"A bit wild," said the Doctor. "Still, it seems to have done the trick."

The members of the armoured column scattered and took cover and soon they were returning what they thought was the enemy's fire. The SS

sentries naturally shot back and soon there was a fierce little battle raging.

The Doctor observed it with a critical eye. "Iron Fatty's not doing very well.

He can't seem to get past the main gate."

"Maybe you should have sent for Rommel instead."

"Let's give him a bit of help." The Doctor began fiddling with levers, depressing the angle of the gun barrel. "Ah, here we are." He sighted along the barrel. "Shell please, Ace. Load - and fire!" Half of the castle's front gate disappeared, blown away from the inside.

"Quick, another one," said the Doctor. "Before they realize where it's coming from."

A second shell took out the rest of the gate and the armoured column roared through the gap, all guns blazing. Battle was joined, black uniforms against grey, and there was furious fighting all around the courtyard. The Doctor and Ace observed the battle from on high, like spectators at a military tattoo. But in this little entertainment, the bodies that fell down didn't get up again. The conditioned SS men of

the War Lords fought with fanatical energy, quite careless of their own lives. But the grey-clad troops of the regular army seemed to be more than holding their own, and very soon there were far more black uniforms than grey ones on the ground.

"Those SS zombies of the War Lords" aren't doing at all well," said the Doctor. "They're so fearless they're easy to kill. A good soldier doesn't die for his country, he gets the enemy to die for his."

"I thought you didn't approve of violence, Professor?"

"I don't, not usually. Maybe I'm getting a bit of my own back too. Maybe I'm being corrupted. Time to go, I think."

"How?" asked Ace. "In case you hadn't noticed we're on top of a tower surrounded by Nazi fanatics busily shooting at each other. I'm sure they'd be only too pleased to start shooting at us for a change."

"I've got a bit of a surprise for you, actually. One little job and - hang on, what's this?"

A light aeroplane was gliding down towards the castle. It touched down on the wide road by the gates and a solitary brown-uniformed figure got out. It strode through the shattered gates and into the courtyard, and everywhere the figure passed men stopped fighting and came to attention, hands raised in salute.

Suddenly the battle was over.

Ace said, "Surely that's. . ."

"I'm afraid so," said the Doctor. "I don't like the look of this at all, Ace.

Come on."

They ran down the stairs, through the empty tower and out into the main courtyard. It was littered with dead bodies and in the centre stood Goering and Himmler, arguing furiously - watched with benign amusement by a third man, the one who had arrived in the aeroplane. He turned as the Doctor and Ace approached, picking their way between the corpses.

"Ah, here is the Herr Doktor. He will give us the truth of things." The Doctor stared at him in amazement and dismay. The newcomer looked trim and fit, confident and alert - and he absolutely radiated power and charisma.

"Well, Doctor?" said Adolf Hitler.

The Doctor cleared his throat. "It's all perfectly simple. Reichsfuehrer Himmler, in an attempt to gain valuable knowledge for the Reich, gave some encouragement to a certain Doctor Kriegslieter, and an organization called the Black Coven."

"I am aware of this," said Hitler. "Doctor Kriegslieter gave me much valuable help and advice."

"To begin with, yes," said the Doctor. "Unfortunately, and indeed treacherously, these men developed ambitions of their own. Entirely unknown to the Reichsfuehrer, they plotted to overthrow you, on the grounds that you were no longer capable."

Hitler laughed with genuine amusement. "Me? Incapable? Believe me, Doctor, I have never felt more capable in my life."

"I discovered this plot, and informed Reichsfuehrer Himmler," said the Doctor. "Naturally he repudiated these men at once. You remember, Herr Reichsfuehrer, we discussed the matter earlier, outside the chapel. Is not that so?"

"Yes, indeed, Herr Doktor," said Himmler gratefully. "You put it very well."

He turned to Hitler. "It is exactly as the Doctor has said."

"I could never doubt your loyalty, my faithful Heinrich," said the Fuehrer.

He turned to Goering. "But I am at a loss to understand the presence of my Reichsmarshal, leading regular army troops in a pitched battle with the SS."

Goering went red and began to splutter. "The Doctor said - he told me. . . "

"Allow me to explain," said the Doctor. "I took the precaution of informing the Reichsmarshal that there was treachery afoot at Drachensberg. In his righteous anger, he commandeered an armoured column and attacked at once. The SS men, hypnotized and brainwashed by the Black Coven, resisted his entrance. But thanks to the heroic efforts of the Reichsmarshal's troops, the traitors have been overcome."

"Quite so, Herr Doktor," said Goering dryly. "If I may say so, you put it very well."

"And this man Kriegslieter? asked Hitler.

"Killed in the fighting, like his corrupt SS men," said the Doctor.

"Excellent," said the Fuehrer. He turned to his two leading henchmen.

"Heinrich, Hermann, you will both return to Berlin with me in my plane. The Polish campaign is a brilliant success. I shall now explain my plans for France and England."

Yoked once more in their uneasy alliance, Himmler and Goering saluted and marched away together, looking still, thought Ace, uncannily like a Nazi Laurel and Hardy.

Hitler turned to the Doctor and shook him warmly by the hand. "I cannot thank you enough, Herr Doktor." He lowered his voice confidentially. "The force that visits me is now my servant - and you taught me to control her."

"I did?" said the Doctor, appalled.

"In the Chancellery, when the British sent me their ultimatum. You taught me to control her with my will. Last night, in Poland, she came again - and I tamed her. Now my mind is clear, my will is strong at all times. I shall win this war, I shall conquer the world - and then, she tells me, there are more worlds to conquer."

The Doctor stared at him in horror. First the Timewyrm, and now a super-Hitler. And it was all his fault.

"Goodbye, Doctor," said Hitler. "When we meet in Berlin, I shall reward you as you deserve." He turned and marched away.

The Doctor and Ace were left alone in the corpse-strewn courtyard. The Doctor's face was stricken. "Oh, no," he murmured. "What have I done?"

"What have you done, Professor?" "Don't you see? I've taught him to control the Timewyrm. She'll feed him enough knowledge and power to destroy the world."

"That need not trouble you, Doctor," said a ghastly voice. "For you, the world ends now."

A black shape was rising out of the mud. It was Kriegslieter. His cloak was drenched with blood. The courtyard was littered with Kriegslieter's brainwashed SS men. They were all dead.

As Ace and the Doctor looked on in unbelieving horror, the corpses started lurching to their feet.

14: CORPSE DISCIPLINE

"The old Prussian army had a favourite expression," croaked Kriegslieter, leaning heavily on his cane. "Corpse discipline. The kind of discipline that makes a corpse jump to attention. As you see, Doctor, I have achieved it."

The Doctor looked round at the little semi-circle of men - of dead men. The blue eyes were blanker than usual, the bloodstained, bullet-riddled bodies bore terrible wounds. Yet still they stood and moved and obeyed orders.

Corpse discipline.

"They are the elite of my elite," said Kriegslieter. "Complete mental linkage.

They are sustained by my will. While I live, they cannot die."

He turned over a body with his foot. It was the War Lord, staring sightlessly at the sky. Kriegslieter looked at the other corpses, the ones that had not risen. "All the others are dead. Once again you have turned up to ruin everything, Doctor. Soon I too shall die. But not before I have seen you and your companion torn to pieces..."

The little army of corpses began lurching towards them.

"Quick, Ace, the tower," yelled the Doctor.

They sprinted across the courtyard and ducked inside. Ace helped the Doctor to close the great door and drop the locking bar.

"Wait here for me," shouted the Doctor. "And hold them off, whatever you do!" "How?" wailed Ace. "It's no use shooting them, they're already dead!"

"Try grenades," yelled the Doctor and disappeared down the stairs.

Ace remembered the grenade-on-helmet demonstration. She rushed over to the arms section, found the grenade box and lugged it across the floor to a position near the staircase. She saw a smoking line moving up from the bottom of the door. It moved up, across and down again, tracing the shape of a small door within the larger one. Kriegslieter's laser cane.

When the door section was complete, it was kicked from the outside and fell inwards. A black shape blocked the hole, and Ace pulled the pin on her first grenade and lobbed it through.

The explosion blew the black shape away, but another took its place.

Another shape, another grenade, another explosion.

Ace lost count of the number of times the sequence was repeated. Soon the number of grenades in the box was getting low. She fumbled a grenade and one of the black shapes got through. The next grenade blew it to wriggling fragments, but another shape was through and another. As they lurched towards her, Ace grabbed the last few grenades and retreated towards the stairs. Somehow she knew she couldn't bear it if one of them touched her.

They were all through now, Kriegslieter as well...

He raised his cane, Ace threw her last grenade, and something grabbed her arm.

It was the Doctor.

"Come on, up to the top!" he yelled.

Ace hared up the stone staircase after him, trying not to think of the dragging feet behind her. Suddenly she became aware that the whole building was shaking.

"What's going on, Professor?" "They've got an atomic reactor down in the basement. Can't leave that sort of thing lying around in the late thirties. Far too anachronistic."

"So what did you do?" As if in answer to her question, the whole tower started shuddering.

"Threw it into overload," yelled the Doctor.

"How long have we got?" The Doctor opened the hatchway to the roof.

"Well, it's hard to be precise, it's a very primitive installation. But judging by the sounds it's making - not. . . very . . . long!" He hauled Ace out on to the roof of the tower. Suddenly she realized the full horror of the situation.

"Hold it, Professor! We're being chased to the top of a tower by a gang of zombies - and your solution is to blow the tower up with an atomic bomb?"

"That's right. It seemed pretty neat to me. What's wrong?" The whole tower seemed to be swaying now.

A crack appeared in the parapet and a chunk fell off.

"Professor!" screamed Ace. "We are standing on top of the tower. The one you are blowing up!" "Not for long," said the Doctor.

He produced a device like a keyring and pressed a control. Nothing happened. The Doctor looked worried. A huge crack appeared in the stone roof of the tower, and some more bits of parapet fell off. A deep rumble filled the air, and the whole tower was lashing to and fro like a ship's mast in a gale.

"Well, Professor?" screamed Ace.

The Doctor frowned thoughtfully. He shook the keyring. Putting his fingers in his mouth he gave a piercing whistle. The TARDIS materialized in midair, hovering about three feet above the ground.

"Blast!" said the Doctor. "It's always the little things. . . "Fishing out his key he said, "Give me a leg up, Ace!" Ace bent down, the Doctor put his feet on her shoulders, and she slowly straightened up. The Doctor reached for the keyhole and the ground rippled under her feet.

Ace staggered and the Doctor fell against the floating TARDIS.

"Keep still, girl," he yelled.

Ace tried but it was like doing a balancing act on a trampoline. Somehow the Doctor managed to get the key in the lock, open the door and scramble inside. He knelt in the open doorway leaning out at a dangerous angle, reaching down for her. Ace couldn't quite reach his outstretched hand.

"I can't do it, Professor," she called. You'll have to go without me!"

"Jump!" shouted the Doctor. "Just grab my hand!"

"I tell you I can't . . ."

Suddenly the hatchway burst open. It was Kriegslieter, zombie soldiers behind him. Ace leaped in the air like a terrified kangaroo The Doctor grabbed her wrist, hauling her up and through the door with amazing ease.

"Close the door!" shouted the Doctor once she was securely in. Ace turned to close the door and caught a glimpse of Kriegslieter emerging from the hatch. The vibration of the tower must have triggered off some of the conventional explosives. Suddenly a great tongue of fire belched out from the hatchway, engulfing him. There bathed in the flame, Ace saw, just for a second, a young man, tall, dark and satanically handsome, reaching up to her . . .

The door closed, the TARDIS dematerialized, and they were gone.

The Drachensberg Tower disappeared in a roaring pillar of fire. When the flames died down, a cloud hung over the area for days. People who stayed on after the catastrophe sickened and died. Eventually the local people said the place was cursed and they all moved away. Drachensberg became an abandoned ruin in a region of desolation.

15: LAST CHANCE

Inside the TARDIS the Doctor was scrabbling inside a locker. He emerged with an old-fashioned storm-lantern, an ancient atlas and an enormous book.

"There's one chance," he muttered. "Just one. . . "

Ace looked down at her tattered sacrificial robe. "Just don't tell me anything till I've had a wash and change, okay?"

When she came back into the control room she found the Doctor had removed a small panel from the console. He was removing a small but complex piece of TARDIS circuitry and transferring it, with enormous care, to the interior of the big old storm-lantern.

Now back in a spare outfit of her usual street gear - jeans, boots, tee shirt, bomber jacket - Ace felt she was herself again. "Okay, Professor. You can start by telling me how you whistled up the TARDIS like

that."

"The whistle was purely symbolic," said the Doctor. "It focused my mind while I sent out a powerful thought-impulse to the TARDIS's telepathic circuits."

"So we could have got away from that ghastly place whenever we wanted to?"

"Well, not really. We were observed and under guard for most of the time, and I didn't dare risk letting the War Lords get their hands on the TARDIS."

"But we could have escaped long before we did? When we were first on the tower for instance?"

"I didn't want to leave till I'd sorted things out. As it is, I've made the most terrible mess of things."

"I thought we won!"

"A Pyrrhic victory," said the Doctor bitterly.

"Come again?"

"We found two kinds of temporal interference, remember? War Lords and Timewyrm. I managed to deal with Kriegslieter and the War Lord and their SS zombies. . ."

Ace nodded. "Pretty thoroughly, I'd say."

"Yes, but they were never the real problem."

Ace shuddered, remembering Kriegslieter standing over her at the altar, the dead SS men rising in the courtyard. "They weren't?"

"Just a bunch of incompetent would-be supermen," said the Doctor dismissively. "Their second plan wasn't much better than the first. Those SS zombies turned out to be pretty useless in battle - no sense of self-preservation, no initiative. Their atomic reactor was a botched-up ramshackle affair, it would probably have gone up by itself in time. They never really knew what they were doing -especially when it came to their dealings with Hitler."

"Because of the Timewyrm?"

"Exactly! The Timewyrm was looking for someone to use as a

figurehead to manipulate human history. She chose Hitler, partly because of his rabblerousing potential, partly because he lived in explosive times. But Adolph's mind had all the strength of madness, and the Timewyrm got trapped inside. She boosted Hitler's powers in an erratic sort of way just by being there, but she couldn't control him properly, and he couldn't control her."

"Then the War Lords came along?"

The Doctor nodded. "Like the Timewyrm, they were looking for a human puppet to make use of - and the Timewyrm-boosted Hitler seemed to be exactly what they needed. They could see Hitler had unusual psychic powers, vast surges of energy.

But they never knew where they came from. They just stabilized him as best they could, and boosted his powers with some fairly crude psychic amplification. A bit like kicking a time bomb to keep it ticking."

"But you sorted Hitler out?"

"Oh yes, I did a wonderful job. In order not to change history, I tried to teach Hitler to cope with the Timewyrm. I overdid it and ended up teaching him to control her. I'd forgotten that megalomaniacs like Hitler have a colossal strength of will."

Ace was beginning to understand. "So Hitler gets to be a perfectly genuine superman?"

The Doctor nodded gloomily. "It's a total disaster! Thanks to me, he's strong, he's magnetic, he's confident and he won't make any more loony mistakes. He could stay on top forever."

"Looks like you've set up a winning combo, Professor. So, what can we do?"

"There's just one chance left," said the Doctor. "If I can intervene, just once more, at precisely the right place and the right time. . ."

"When and where?"

The Doctor consulted his book.

Ace looked over his shoulder at the title. " *The Day by Day Almanac of World War II.*

"We're going to a place codenamed Felsennest," said the Doctor. "On a particular night in May 1940."

Ace counted on her fingers. "That's what, about nine months after we left?

Can you time things that close?"

"I must," said the Doctor. "I must." He finished his work on the storm-lantern and snapped it closed.

Ace looked curiously at the lantern. "And where does that come in?"

"I shall use it," said the Doctor, "to light up the dark recesses of Hitler's mind -and reveal the Timewyrm."

PART FOUR 1940 CRISIS

In the first weeks of the war Adolf Hitler demonstrated the most extraordinary qualities of determination and decision. Immune to fatigue, showing little need for food or sleep, he launched the successful invasion of Poland, and soon afterwards prepared and carried out the Blitzkrieg, the lightning conquest of Europe.

Led by the Panzer tank columns, his armies flowed over Europe in a seemingly unstoppable tide...

Reminiscences of World War II by General H. Popplewell.

Published London, 1946.

1: EXODUS OF EVIL

Felsennest, the "eyrie on the cliffs", was close to Aachen, the ancient capital of King Charlemagne. It was Adolf Hitler's command post at the beginning of the war.

The command bunker had been blasted from solid rock high on a heavily wooded mountaintop near the village of Rodert. It was a secure place, ringed with barbed wire and concrete gun emplacements.

It was late at night, and Adolf Hitler had dismissed his staff. He stood alone, in his uniform tunic, his "soldier's coat", gazing out over the mountains and the forests, thinking of all the countries that were, or would soon be, his own. Holland, Belgium, France and soon, England.

He wasn't in the least surprised when the Doctor and Ace appeared out of the night, toiling up the mountainside. It was almost as if he was expecting them. He opened the door and called out to the suspicious sentry to let them in.

Once they were inside, Hitler nodded jovially at the glowing lantern in the Doctor's hand. "You come to bring me light, as usual, Herr Doktor?"

"I hope so," said the Doctor sombrely. "How goes the war?"

If the Doctor was grim, Adolf Hitler was cheerful, confident, totally in

command of events. "Very well, Herr Doktor, very well indeed." He led them to a wall map and picked up a pointer. "Poland is ours, of course.

Holland and Belgium have been over- run and in France my armies have encircled the enemy and reached Abbeville, here. Boulogne and Calais have already fallen, and General Guderian's Panzer Division is about to cut off the only remaining port, some little place called. . . " He peered at the map. "Dunkirk."

The Doctor heaved a sigh of relief, and breathed a little prayer of thanks to the TARDIS.

"A magnificent achievement," said the Doctor heartily. "And the credit is Yours - all yours."

"Mine - and that power within me, Doctor. The power which you taught me to harness and control."

"You are too modest," said the Doctor. "The credit is yours all yours. This so-called power is nothing beside your towering genius."

He's laying it on with a shovel, thought Ace. What's he up to?

Hitler started to look tense, uneasy, haunted. "No, no, Doctor. The power within me must have its due."

"What power?" said the Doctor scornfully. "Some pathetic ghost, wandering the universe, looking for a free ride. I know all about her. The Timewyrm, she calls herself. Well, the worm bit's accurate enough, burrowing for safety into the mud of this pathetic planet. She's nothing." He held up the glowing lantern to illuminate Hitler's face. Suddenly Hitler went rigid. His eyes glowed brightly with a strange silvery light. "Nothing Doctor? You dare say

'I' am nothing?" It wasn't Hitler's voice. It was the voice of the Timewyrm.

"Nothing and less than nothing," said the Doctor. "Still, I suppose you've found your level, risen to the top like the cosmic scum you are."

The eyes burned brighter. Hitler's whole body began to glow.

"But then, what are you after all?" said the Doctor rhetorically. "A tame witch doctor serving a petty human warlord, helping him to rule

his mudball of a planet."

Adolf Hitler's body glowed even brighter and it began to change. It became a pillar of light, and from that pillar emerged a metallic feminine form. It was a good seven feet tall, classically beautiful and totally terrifying. It was the Timewyrm, manifested in all her evil glory. Ace shuddered, remembering the clutch of icy metal fingers in her heart.

The Timewyrm didn't even see her. "A servant?" she shrieked. "I turned this pot-house politician, this street-corner ranter into a man who could rule a country!

Now, if I choose, I will give him a world, a galaxy! I will rule through him!

Rule and destroy!"

"You pathetic cosmic poltergeist," said the Doctor scornfully. "Go and smash a few cups, slam a few doors, frighten old ladies in the night. You're not a power, you're just a petty nuisance. You bore me."

The Timewyrm hissed with rage.

The Doctor held up his lantern to the tall silver form. "You're trapped in the mind of a madman and you know it. Soon you will burn him out. As he grows older and madder and eventually dies, you too will wither away." He paused, then said with elaborate indifference, "Of course, if you were to be housed in the mind of a Time Lord. . . "

"Do you offer me an alliance, Doctor?"

"I offer you a fair fight - here, on your own ground, away from the TARDIS. I can free you from this human's mind."

"And then?"

"My mind is yours - if you can take it."

"Very well, Doctor. I accept your challenge."

Holding up the lantern, the Doctor stared deep into the Timewyrm's burning eyes. "Then come out of your hiding place and fight, Timewyrm!"

There was a long, long pause. The air pulsated with psychic energy.

Suddenly the Timewyrm gave a shriek of triumph.

"I am free!"

She swept towards them, leaving the crumpled body of Adolf Hitler behind her on the floor. " So you dare to challenge me, Doctor? Do you know who I am, little man? I am the Timewyrm. I am invincible! I shall swallow your mind, take over your TARDIS - and then I shall be the supreme power in the universe!"

As the Timewyrm bore down on the Doctor she grew and grew until she filled the room.

The Doctor touched a control in the base of the lantern and it burned with the fierce brightness of a star. As the Timewyrm swooped down on him he thrust the lantern full into her face. She lashed her tail angrily, battering at the globe of brilliance - then she exploded in a sudden burst of light, vanishing with a last terrible howl . . .

Suddenly everything was quiet.

There on the floor crouched Adolf Hitler, sobbing.

The Doctor lifted him into a seat.

"The power has left me, Doctor," whispered Hitler. "What must I do? Tell me."

The Doctor leaned over him, staring into the terrified eyes, speaking in a calm positive voice. "You must let the British Army go! Even though you are at war with the British, you respect them, you admire their Empire. Let their army go home, postpone your invasion plan and eventually they will make peace with you. They will become your allies against the Bolshevik hordes, your real enemy."

"Yes, yes, you are right," said Hitler feverishly.

The Doctor handed him a field-telephone. "You are the Fuehrer. Give the order."

Hitler took the phone, and managed a shaky version of his old commanding tone. "This is the Fuehrer. Send this message to General Guderian immediately. There is to be no further advance on Dunkirk. No further advance."

"That's the idea," said the Doctor. "Remember, no advance on Dunkirk,

postpone the invasion of England... Come on, Ace, we must go."

Hitler looked up in alarm. "You are leaving, Doctor? But what will become of me?"

The Doctor paused for a moment in the doorway. "You will fulfil your destiny," he said.

The Doctor and Ace disappeared into the night.

The Fuehrer is terribly nervous. He seems frightened by his own success, and he is unwilling to take any risks. He keeps trying to hold us back.

This order to halt before Dunkirk is utter madness...

The secret diary of General Rommel

In Dunkirk the long lines of weary soldiers were filing out to sea where the little ships waited to ferry them from the beaches to the waiting destroyers.

The howling Stukas dive-bombed the men and the ships, but the encircling Nazi armies still held back.

In seven days over three hundred thousand men were evacuated. We British said it was a miracle and at home in England, it was hailed as a great victory.

But, as Winston Churchill was quick to remind us, wars are not won by evacuations. Mere was much to be done, and our task was only beginning.

But at least we had survived to continue the fight...

"Reminiscences of World War II" General Popplewell

2: BITTER VICTORY

"Okay, Professor, talk," said Ace.

They had made their way safely back to the precarious mountain ledge where the TARDIS had landed. Now they were back in the control room, and the TARDIS was once again in flight.

The Doctor seemed gloomy and cast down. "Talk? What about?"

"The magic lantern for a start. What was it?"

The Doctor brightened a little. "A telepathic relay. I used it to extend the TARDIS forcefield. I tapped the power of the TARDIS to help me to free the Timewyrm from Hitler's brain. When she attacked me I boosted the power of the forcefield and it blew her away."

"So she's destroyed?" said Ace hopefully.

"Well, you might say she's gone all to pieces," said the Doctor. He checked the time-path indicator. "You see, nothing. No reading."

"So where is she?"

"Swirling round the void in an unfocused storm of anger. But her will to survive is enormous. She'll get herself together again."

"So we haven't heard the last of her?"

The Doctor sighed. "I doubt it. I couldn't even do that properly."

"Look, what's the matter with you, Professor?"

"It's all such a mess!"

"What is?"

"Your bloody human history. You mangle yourselves quite enough if you're left alone. But this! War Lord interference, Timewyrm interference, and now my cack-handed interference on top of all that."

"You did your best, Professor."

"And look what came of it! I not only got one of the most terrible wars in human history back on the road, I freed the Timewyrm in the process!

Trapped in Hitler's mind she might have withered away and died. Now she's still out there roaming the cosmos, and the whole job's got to be done again."

"Well, at least you put history right."

"What's right about it?" said the Doctor gloomily. "History's been mucked about so much, who knows what's true and what's false. And who cares anyway?"

"Come off it, Professor, we know what's supposed to happen."

"Six years of war," said the Doctor savagely. "Everything from the Holocaust to Hiroshima, with Dresden along the way! And I made sure it all happened on schedule!"

"Where does Dresden come in to it?"

"Oh, it was just a pretty little historical beauty spot, hammered into rubble for no good reason at all."

Ace frowned. "Hang on, Dresden's in Germany, the Nazis wouldn't do that."

"They didn't. Your lot did."

Ace nodded sombrely. "Our side did Hiroshima as well - and Nagasaki . . .

But none of it's your fault, Doctor. All you did was put things back the way they were. So the Nazis lost in 'forty-five, and Adolf s Thousand Year Reich fizzled out after twelve. Opening the way for a future which produced wonderful things like perestroika, a united Europe and me."

"Ah, but did it? The fabric of time was badly torn, Ace. You can't stitch it up like repairing an old shirt. Suppose I made things even worse?"

Ace looked worriedly at him. She'd never seen the Professor so down.

Drastic measures were needed.

"Well, let's go back and see."

"Where?"

"Where we came in."

"1951? Are you sure? If history's been even more radically altered, it might not have produced you at all - you could disappear the minute we leave the TARDIS!"

"I'll risk it," said Ace cheerfully. "Anything's better than travelling through time and space with a depressed Professor. Let's get back to that soggy festival."

EPILOGUE: A STITCH IN TIME

The TARDIS landed on the South Bank in the pouring rain.

The Doctor and Ace emerged. The Doctor looked at the Skylon. No swastika marred the slender, impractical tower. He looked at Ace. She was still there.

"Well, you did it, Professor," she said. "You put a stitch in time."

The Doctor beamed. "We did it, Ace."

Ace nodded. "This time we definitely done good!"

The Doctor put up his umbrella. "Want to visit the Pavilion of the Future?"

"I'm hungry. How about a cuppa and a bun?"

They made their way to a coffee stall where a cheerful little man was polishing tea spoons. A notice over his head read:

ME COFFEE SHOP -H. GOLDSTEIN, PROP.

"What can I do you for?" he asked.

"Two teas and two buns, please," said the Doctor.

The little man served their tea and buns. The tea was strong, the buns rich and fruity. The Doctor and Ace ate and drank with great enjoyment.

"Very good cup of tea, this," said the Doctor.

And Ace said indistinctly, "Terrific bun!"

The little man was pleased. "Well, they give us extra rations for the old Festival. Nice to be able to give people something decent for a change.

You gotta admit it, things are getting better slowly. Look, it's even stopped raining."

The Doctor furled his umbrella.

A couple of yobs slouched over to the stall, jostling Ace and the Doctor aside.

"How about a free cuppa?" said the first.

"And a pound out the till?" said the second. "Come on, all you yids are rolling in it."

Ace clenched her fists and drew a deep breath.

The Doctor touched her arm. "Let him handle it."

The little man leaned over his counter and pointed a warning finger. "You

'oppit!" he said. "Before I come round there and clip your ear."

"You and who else?" said the first youth.

Ace tapped him on the shoulder. "Him and me, for a start."

The Doctor sighed and took a firm grip of his umbrella.

A policeman appeared, a large old-fashioned Dixon-of-Dock-Green-type policeman. "Any trouble?"

The little man laughed. "Them? Trouble? I survived old 'Itler's blitz, mate. I should worry about the likes of them."

The policeman looked at the youths.

"Oppit!"

The two yobs hopped it.

The policeman said, "All right, Harry?"

"Fine, ta. Want a cuppa?"

"Later, maybe." The policeman touched his helmet and moved on. Faint hurdy-gurdy sounds floated towards them along the river. Dusk was falling, and coloured lights gleamed in the distance. The Doctor turned to the stall owner. "What's that music?"

"And what are those lights?" asked Ace.

The little man stared at them in amazement. "Where you bin?"

"You'd be surprised, mate," said Ace.

"Got a funfair, haven't they?" said the little man. "Over in Battersea Park."

He grinned. "All these years of post-war austerity, now it's all Festivals and funfairs! Funny old world, innit?"

"I like funfairs," said the Doctor. He looked at Ace. "Do you like funfairs?"

"Yeah, why not? Come on, Professor."

They said goodbye to the coffee-stall man and strolled away. "He's right, you know," said Ace.

"Who is?"

"The coffee-stall man. It is a funny old world."

"I know," said the Doctor. "But it could have been a lot worse."

"Well, it has been, hasn't it?" said Ace. "But we sorted that out. Like I say, we done good." She grinned at the Doctor. To her great relief, he grinned back. They walked along the misty riverbank together, on towards the lights and the music.

CODA

The entity that had once been Lieutenant Hemmings of the Freikorps hung suspended in burning darkness. Images of pain and death and destruction washed through his mind. He had been mocked, humiliated, betrayed. The girl had never been broken to his will, and the strange little man had tricked him.

Once they were back in his power he would make them beg for death - and then deny them. They should suffer an eternity of torment. All his enemies would suffer, all those who had scorned and despised him all his life. He would annihilate them all, he would destroy the world . . .

An icily beautiful voice, cold and silvery and metallic, spoke inside his head.

"Congratulations! You are making excellent progress. Soon, very soon, you shall have your revenge. . . "

NEWS: TERRANCE DICKS, DOCTOR WHO NOVELS AND MORE.

This is a reprinted edition of Terrance Dicks' first New Adventure, originally published in 1991, which remains one of the most popular in the series.

Since the book - only the second in the series - was published, the New Adventures have become established, have prospered, have had moments of controversy, but have also achieved much acclaim. Terrance Dicks was by far the most prolific and popular of the Target novelization authors; with this book he demonstrated his ability to write gripping adult Doctor Who fiction too.

Terrance's work is so well known to fans of the programme of which he was script editor for five years that there's very little we can add. His second New Adventure, *Blood Harvest*, is due out in July 1994 and ties in with that month's *Goth Opera*, the first in a series of Missing Adventures. These will be full-length, original stories featuring old Doctors and filling some of the gaps between the television stories. *Blood Harvest* is also a sequel to the fourth Doctor story *State of Decay* set on the planet of the vampires and featuring the return of Romana.

If you liked *Timewyrm: Exodus* you'll love *Blood Harvest* take our word for it.

Peter Darvill-Evans & Rebecca Levene Doctor Who Publisher & Editor

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